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Series of First Volumes: Number Seven

*A Spider Phaeton
and Other Stories*

A SPIDER PHAETON

*and Other Stories by
William John Pickard*



CHICAGO ~ WILL RANSOM ~ 1924

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For
M. C.

*“Better to be a broken crystal than a
perfect tile on the housetop.”*

*“Deep pools of color on a pale green lake,
Green dawns with one white star . . . ”*

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*A Spider Phaeton
and Other Stories*

A Spider Phaeton

My Dear Mr. Eliot:

It would give us pleasure to have you with us over the next week end. There are not to be many guests, but among them are some that you know, and others, I hope, that you will enjoy meeting.

I trust that you will pardon the tardiness of this note. I wrote to you a week ago. To my dismay I have just discovered that through the carelessness of my secretary the letter was never mailed.

I hope that nothing will prevent your coming and that we may expect you in time for tea Friday afternoon.

Cordially yours,

Charlotte Chesterfield Kingsley

*May twenty-first,
Nineteen twenty-three.*

The white, silky linen with unravelled edges was engraved in miniature script:

*The Kingsley Manor
Lake Forest, Illinois.*

Joseph Eliot held the stationery to the light. A soft transparency and a weave of many fine lines greeted his eyes. On the last sheet was a dim watermark of kissing doves and stars enclosed with a border of right angles and half circles. There was not the slightest suggestion of perfume, just the refreshing scent of elegant, finely woven linen.

He read the note again. His eyes blinked. He whipped out his glasses and read it for the third time. He blew on his glasses, wiped them with his cotton handkerchief, and read it the fourth time. "There must be some mistake," he said to himself. Mrs. John Chesterfield Kingsley he had never met. Heard of her, yes, frequently. Who hadn't? All New York, Washington, Chicago, and parts more distant, that had a part in Society or worshipped its activities from afar — and such was the case with Joseph Eliot—had heard of Lady Kingsley. The society columns were crowded with her numerous yet not too numerous entertainments, and nearly as frequently illustrated with her pictures. "Among those present at the Opera at the Auditorium last night were Mr. and Mrs. John Chesterfield Kingsley. In their box with them were Lord and Lady Mount-Savage, Mr. and Mrs. Fifield Jones, and the John Henry Hendersons." As a social leader she had no peer, and her influence in the world of art, philanthropy, and politics had few bounds. It was whispered, as such things are, that she had made members of more than one President's Cabinet. To be invited to one of her week ends at her Lake Forest Estate automatically

made our Joseph Eliot the envy of high diplomacy; counts, earls, dukes; the presidents of far flung corporations; others of lesser titles but no less distinction.

There certainly was a mistake. Although it was Joseph Eliot's address that appeared on the envelope, the invitation must have been meant for another person with the same name. No one was conscious of this error more than Joseph Eliot, himself. Furthermore, his was the quandary; he it was who had to decide whether or not to attend. There must be many famous Joseph Eliots in many honorable and noteworthy professions. Right at the moment he could not specifically remember reading about any, but the odds were all in favor of their existence.

However, adventure comes seldom, even to Evening American reporters, as Eliot well knew from his two years' work with that Chicago paper.

If he had been on the staff of the Social Column, perhaps the invitation would not have held such an unusual appeal. Its glamor to him was that of a flame to a moth. Why should he send it back to be re-addressed to the right Eliot. Here was his chance to attend an affair the like of which he had never seen before; and, moreover, never would see unless he grasped the present opportunity.

He read the invitation for the fifth time . . .
"There are not to be many guests . . . " He smiled wisely; he knew what that meant—not more than a hundred. Mrs. John Chesterfield Kingsley's conception of a limited number was comparative.

There would be tennis, riding, golf, polo; accomplished ladies, beautiful debutantes. Yet, on the other hand, the humiliation of being an unwelcome guest, and the probability of encountering the right Mr. Eliot, was acutely deterring. Then, a real obstacle, he had no clothes. In the bank were his savings of two years; the money with which he planned to marry in the fall. Ah well, he might meet a wealthy debutante who would take a fancy to him. He was sorry for that thought, its injustice to his lovely fiancée. Nevertheless, he would plunge the money in clothes—Who was it that said “appearance is the best investment?” Oh yes, the House of Kuppenheimer in the Saturday Evening Post. But, to Eliot, Marcus Aurelius could have been no more convincing. It is easy for any slogan that phrases our desire to carry conviction. At that he probably would not have enough to include a riding suit and polo outfit. Oh well, he could not ride anyway. Although a good driver behind a buck-board or a plow, having been brought up on a farm, his knowledge astride a horse was limited. At the time he read of that great polo match between the Lake Forest Blues and the Detroit Free Lancers at the Onwentsia Club with “sons of prominent families as participants” he decided to take up polo. Astride a gymnasium horse of the nearest Y. M. C. A. he had swung heroically with a wooden mallet. Although not very satisfactory, this went on after hours for several nights until the janitor got wind of it and spilled him and his lusty steed.

Well, he would have to forego the riding; he could

plead chronic appendicitis. Realizing that there was no time to spare, he went at once to an establishment on Michigan Boulevard, whose advertisements he had long devoured, that of a fashionable tailor, who finally agreed for an unethical consideration to rush the clothes through in time for him to depart Friday morning for Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley's Manor.

That evening, walking down the row of poplar trees to the home of Louisa Neonardo, the thought came to him, though not bitterly, that if he had refrained from buying her a ring the month before, he could have included hurried riding lessons and the polo outfit. Joseph Eliot turned the corner; so did the poplar trees. They led right to her house and then stopped, as if to say that they knew where all good things dwelt. Her father, though an ignorant Italian, reaching this country long before selective immigration, had, with his vulgarity, an embracing love of nature and all that is beautiful. It was not by chance that he built his house at the end of the poplar row. Louisa was on the porch, rocking in a wobbly wicker chair; the season was early. Eliot stopped to smile at her before mounting the steps. He ended by gasping. He always did. Every evening her entrancing Latin beauty arrested him, threw him into breathlessness, before he could regain sufficient control of himself to speak the pleasantries of the day. She had that exquisite bewitching charm that sometimes comes from the marriage of an American girl to a man from one of the warm sunny countries that border the Mediterranean. Her hair, jet black, parted

just to the left of center, flowed loosely down well over each ear before circling back to form a rather old fashioned knot at the nape of her neck. At times, retaining the part in the center, she drew it tight against her scalp, setting it off with a jade rhinestone comb, and then it was that she reminded Eliot of the portraits of Italian ladies in the Art Institute. He had not been far afield. Comb or no comb, brass earrings, at least two inches in diameter, hung at all times below the black hair. Her skin was olive, though not as dark an olive as would have been the case if straight Italian blood had run in her veins. Predominantly a true daughter of the Latins, her dress was at all times colorful. Now it was blending as best it could borders and figures of red and blue and black on a surface of pale yellow.

Mr. Neonardo was busy striking out at the June bugs that swished and sizzled about, swearing silently the while with a mixture of rolling "Yankee" oaths and a sharp staccato rendering of the blasphemy of his own land. Occasionally he spat with gusto over the railing onto the sidewalk. Mr. Neonardo had little more respect for sidewalks than for handkerchiefs. He could have managed very well without either.

The slight breeze which had commenced to stir the poplar trees was melody to his soul. He expatiated upon it.

"Father, dear, won't you please go in the house? Joseph and I have something we want to talk over together privately." Neonardo, loath to leave the

breeze, and even feeling more kindly toward the June bugs, such is the influence of a contrary suggestion, sauntered in slowly. He had become Americanized to the extent of giving his daughter her way.

Joseph drew the kitchen chair, vacated by Mr. Neonardo, close to the rocker, and dove his hand into an inside coat pocket. "Louisa, dear, I must show you the letter that came for me in the afternoon mail." He gave her Mrs. John Chesterfield Kingsley's invitation with a flourishing, proud gesture. She read it slowly, her lips moving. "I wish you were going, Louisa." A smile stole from the corners of her red mouth; she dropped her eye lashes. So heavy were they that it seemed as if a black shadow rested on her cheeks. Her head came closer to Joseph.

Down Halsted Street, a few blocks away, the street-cars were clanging.

"You are going then?"

"Why yes, certainly. It will be a great opportunity for me to meet interesting and worth while people. Just think, Louisa. Counts, and dukes and earls, and financial leaders, and maybe kings will be there. A wonderful chance for me, even considering my work alone. Perhaps I will meet William Randolph Hearst, himself. And then Mrs. John Chesterfield Kingsley! Surely you have heard of her, Louisa."

"Oh, yes. Yes, I have. But how do you think she came to ask you, Joseph? Do you know her?"

"Well, no. That is, not well. But probably she has heard of the work, the writing, I have been doing on

The American and wants to meet me. That could be, you know."

"Perhaps you will fall in love with one of the young ladies of—of high society." There was seriousness and a slight trembling in her voice.

"Oh, you mean a debutante: Oh no."

But Louisa was not certain; Joseph Eliot did not speak. He looked over the porch-rail, whistled, speculated. He did not mention the vast sums he was spending for clothes. A boy on a bicycle, the wick of the lamp turned far down to prevent smoking, went by, shoving hard, his short legs scarcely long enough to reach the pedals. A Ford horn sounded. Joseph Eliot jumped up. He couldn't stay any longer; had a lot to do in order to be ready for the week end. Of course he would see Louisa again before he left. He lit a cigarette quickly, blew smoke at Louisa, wheeled to run down the stairs, paused, snapped his fingers; spun back on his heels to kiss her. He went down the street, puffing more and more rapidly on his cigarette, the smoke stack of a locomotive. He had forgotten to write his acceptance to Mrs. John Chesterfield Kingsley. Very bad form to postpone that. He took the street car south on Halsted, transferred, reached the loop, got off at Seventh and walked into the Blackstone. The letter finished, he left the Blackstone for one of Thompson's restaurants, two blocks west. He slept going home on the bumpy cars. In his room, undressing, he lost his composure. The suits were ordered, the letter of acceptance was written on Blackstone stationery, but his courage was

going. It was well to speak to Louisa of his hidden fame having reached Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley; but he knew otherwise. That night he dreamed of the right Mr. Eliot, a tall, ornate gentleman, faultlessly clad, who looked at him indifferently through a monocle, and then chased him to the top of the kitchen stove with a broom. He was falling down from the stove. Down, down, down—he woke up on the floor—crawled trembling to the light, and punched it on quickly, as if to get the jump on an adversary—but neither the tall ornate gentleman nor his broom were under the bed.

The matter of transportation was yet to be settled. How was he going to the Kingsley Manor? The “Rent a New Ford Company” could not be entrusted with solving the difficulty. There would be too many of the tall, the polished, the cool, passing in Packards, Cadillacs, and Rolls Royces—liveried footmen, Russian wolf hounds—while he chugged along with the aid of even a new Ford. Never! He would have to hit upon something more auspicious. He wished to arrive in some sort of a distinguished vehicle of his own. Then there was the question of a valet. Should he bring one, or were they provided? Knowing of no one who would do for such an exacting task, for certainly Mr. Neonardo with his hawking and guttural Italian would be a misfit, he finally decided there would be one present. For the benefit of this gentleman he bought a silk dressing gown, and, also for his benefit, had it liberally monogrammed on the upper left hand pocket and the cuffs of the sleeves. No chewed and charred dollar briar in the

presence of a valet; he purchased a Dunhill. "How shall I dra-aw your bauth, sir, luke warm, hot?"

"No. Always cold, very cold, Gaston."

"Very good, Sir."

But there returned the pressing need of conveyance. The inspiration for determining it did not arrive until late Thursday afternoon. The grocery wagon drew up at the front door. Joseph Eliot was looking out the window. He jerked up his chin. He whipped out his glasses and pressed his forehead against the glass. There, to his mind, was a horse; as graceful and stylish a Hackney mare as he had ever seen at the shows. She was a glossy chestnut, heavy in proportion to her height, neck arched, tail bobbed, chest deep, and with the much desired white stockings. How well that mare would look, with blinders and appropriate harness, drawing a suitable rig. What was she doing hitched to a grocery wagon? In this day of cars, the fine horses were either relegated to the country, or else hitched to grocery wagons. It was a crime, he thought, as he went down the stairs three at a time. He rode back to the store with the boy.

The proprietor, a sputtering German, was dubious. "What do you want of my horse? She I prize big. Very valuable horse. My father once sent her to me from the farm. You run a grocery?"

"Oh no, Lord no!" Mr. Eliot replied. "I'm going to drive to Lake Forest." Lake Forest didn't seem to clarify matters for the Halsted Street Grocer. "I merely want to hire her for the week end."

"I know, I know, but mine Gott, what am I doing for deliveries?"

"Send a boy around; hire a Ford. I might be able to pay for it in addition to renting your mare." They finally agreed.

At a nearby livery stable all that could be found in the way of a conveyance was a tall enclosed carriage with coachman's seat aloft. The veteran liveryman assured Mr. Eliot that it had been the first carriage in all important Chicago weddings and funerals thirty years before, and, although it hadn't been on the streets since, that it could easily be dusted and set to rolling. But Mr. Eliot was not convinced. A further half day's search made him fear that he would have to go back to the grocery wagon. Finally he was rewarded; he discovered a very presentable Spider Phaeton. The seat for two in front was constructed on iron loops, which also aided in supporting the flimsy groom's seat in rear. The dark blue plush of the front seat and the large old fashioned lamps at the side stirred him with their forgotten elegance; and a thorough greasing banished the squeak from the small front and large rear wheels.

Mr. Neonardo was to have his day—if he wanted it. He was not certain that he wanted it. He saw a "different light." "Me, coachman? No Sir. Nota me." Not until the grandeur and pomp of a long coat with brass buttons, and a tall silk hat, was vividly painted did he consent.

The tailor had promised the clothes for early Friday morning. He did better than that. They were out

Thursday night: one tweed sport, one blue serge suiting, a broadcloth dinner jacket and full dress, two pair of white flannel trousers, a tennis shirt, and sports blazer. Eliot took them out of the box and hung them up, well satisfied with their appearance. His satisfaction was short. They looked uncompromisingly new. Something would have to be done about that. He jumbled them back into the box, and rolled it around on the floor. Then, in turn, he put each on to go through calisthenics; brisk, severe exercising, feet over head for the suits. Simple flexing of the arms and legs had to suffice for the sport wear and sundries; he was getting tired. At that it was two o'clock before he was in bed. He arose that morning rather lame. This, however, did not prevent an early start. Lake Forest is a long way to go with a Hackney and a Spider Phaeton. Neonardo was on deck, anxious to be off in a display of his stylish raiment. He was a person of moods, was Neonardo, not to be handled with thick gloves.

The Hackney pranced. The blue ribbon winners of the gentleman at whose restaurants Eliot ate most of his meals could scarcely have surpassed her for style. She responded to the days of yore. Her knees went higher and higher, as the dignity and ease of a Phaeton over that of a grocery wagon was impressed upon her. Eliot wished that she would save her style for Sheridan Road. He was erect, a gentleman, chamois driving gloves, his long yellow whip held diagonally in fair accordance with a picture he had noted in the equestrian number of the National Geographic. Back of him sat

the camouflaged Neonardo, his silk hat a trifle too far back on his round head, the brass buttons shining with the early morning sun. It gave promise of being a very hot day.

Neonardo was somewhat of a worry to Eliot; the openness of the Phaeton encouraged his spitting, and the lack of an absorbing task left him free to stretch and twist his neck in every direction. Yet he was not a total failure as a groom; he was capable of abundant pomp and swagger. By the time, stepping east, that they reached Sheridan Road, Eliot was master of the reins. They swung onto the new outside drive, carefully keeping to the curb next to the lake. Cars whizzed by. Neonardo looked out over the calm water, sparkling with the sun. The sky was bluer above his Italy, yet he was content. There was also beauty here.

Many people thought they were a float for the opening of a new boulevard or the like. A few, that they were an advertisement for the Chauve Souris (for the Hackney was already commencing to tire.) But Eliot was not uncomfortable. On the faces of more than one he caught looks of approval and even envy. Perhaps his example might be the means of bringing back fashionable carriages to the streets of Chicago. There were many advantages. Even going through Rogers Park, they were not in danger of being "pinched." A Rolls Royce drew alongside, slowed down—a liveried chauffeur and footman, a Russian Wolf hound on the running board—undoubtedly bound for the Chesterfield Kingsley's. An assemblage of the exclusive, the ele-

gant, the cool, leaned out. Mr. Joseph Eliot was sufficiently exclusive and elegant, but he was not cool. Neither was Neonardo. The sun was beating down on the open Spider with the intensity of an August noon. The mare was sweating; Neonardo was sweating; moreover he did not intend to put up with it. He had come prepared for such an emergency. The brims of silk hats are not broad enough. From beneath his long groom's coat he whipped a large red Italian umbrella, which, after opening to fully the circumference of the mammoth rear wheels, he hoisted over his head. The effect was colorful. Too colorful. Eliot protested vehemently, but Neonardo was obdurate. "What you thinka I do, seet and boil like lobster?" The fellow was evidently no more qualified to be a coachman than a valet. He had made a mistake. Finally they compromised by moving north on side streets, Neonardo retaining his red shade; for all the world like a farmer coming into market. Even on these obscure avenues, Eliot felt that they were watched by a thousand eyes. However, when they stopped in a deserted spot to lunch on Neonardo's sandwiches, he was glad to crawl under the umbrella. The mare munched in a feed bag, which Neonardo had strung over her neck—at least the fellow forgot nothing—blowing and snorting in it from time to time to disperse the dust and chaff. The more she ate the more particular she became, and the harder and oftener she blew. Neonardo, with a full stomach, stretched out for a nap. The mare nodded her approval. Eliot was in the minority. He paced back and

forth. There was no hurrying an Italian. Eliot had washed out four pairs of socks and a shirt the night before. A night's hanging on the mirror had failed to dry them. They were jammed inside his new, monogrammed Gladstone bag in a rubber covering. Thinking he might as well make use of the delay in some way, he cut off part of the rope with which the mare was tied, retied her, and strung the extra piece between the Spider's rear guards, which jutted out beyond the groom's seat. Thus there was an acceptable clothes line over which to hang in the sunlight his four pairs of socks and his shirts. Fortunately, the flies were bad. Neonardo did not sleep long. On they went, the red umbrella a beacon to the front, the socks and shirt a signal to the rear. Eliot had forgotten them.

Caesar with all his array was never better equipped for a triumphal entry. As the afternoon cooled, entreaties succeeded in lowering the umbrella.

"And you socka." Eliot blushed. He pulled in the line. They returned to Sheridan Road.

As they approached the Chesterfield Kingsley estate, Eliot grew more and more excited, while even Neonardo, subconsciously scenting a great impending event, fidgeted on his seat. Eliot whipped up the horse, and that animal in a last valiant splurge dashed between the posts of the colossal stone gate, throwing her mane and champing the bit. Neonardo sat straight, motionless, riveted. A true Italian, there was never a time when he did not rise to a dramatic situation. Eliot, alone, quivered. Not, it is true, for the Spider, for that they

would be envied, but because of the right Mr. Eliot. Sweat stood out on his forehead in contemplation of the cool reception he was bound to receive from Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley for usurping the place of another. What would he say to her? What could he say to her? Now that he was here, he marvelled at his courage; he should never have come.

They were fashionably late. The guests were gathered on the lawn at tea. Eliot yanked the mare to a halt. Eyes were on him. He descended. An attendant, like his mistress, equal to any occasion, directed Neonardo and the charger to the stables. Eliot felt that his last support was gone. A tall stately lady approached smiling, Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley. To Eliot she was a picture of supreme grace and charm. "I am Mr. Eliot," he said defiantly, an attempt at bravado to cover his shivering, "Mr. Joseph Eliot."

"Yes, of course. So nice of you to come at all." It was so sweet of him to arrive in a carriage. He was doing that which many of them had long wished the courage to accomplish. It was so lovely when carriages were in vogue. She hoped that his distinguished example would go a long way toward bringing them back. Would he join them now to have some tea, or go first to his room? He would find his bags there. He would first have tea? That was so nice of him. Would he have lemon or sugar in his tea. "Neither," he answered, though he was very fond of sugar. People looked at him. He was afraid that his trousers might be too baggy. Several glances reassured him on this.

In fact, it was apparent that he should have exercised longer in his. To the right he saw a distinguished looking gentleman, slender, combed, a monocle, in his button hole a white gardenia. He felt certain that he was *the* Mr. Eliot. He corresponded identically to the man with a broom, in his dream. Dodging his glance, he, like a criminal, trembling, about to make a confession, leaned toward Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley, and asked her if she would mind telling him the name of the gentleman with the white gardenia. It was difficult for Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley to tell whom he meant; there was more than one gentleman wearing a gardenia. She said Mr. Hawkinson—perhaps she had the wrong man in view. She asked if he would like to meet him. Eliot was emphatically negative in his answer. Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley was a little surprised. After introducing him to an elaborate old dowager, she turned her conversation to others. The dowager asked if he belonged to the Virginia Eliots. He said he didn't think so. "Or the New England Eliots?" He thought it wasn't likely. His father was James Eliot, he ventured hesitantly. She looked blank, but replied that she had heard of him. Society is quite often polite. The dowager moved off, unquestionably to find a representative of the Virginia Eliots. Left alone, Joseph stood on one foot, then the other. There were people to whom he had been introduced chatting near him. Would it be all right to take part in their conversation? Certainly. He decided, however, to consider such a step for several minutes before taking it. The

several minutes up, he came to the conclusion that it was then too late; that, having permitted them to talk among themselves for such a length of time, his entry would be conspicuous. He continued to balance from one foot to the other. Finally, one of the important editors of his newspaper, whose presence was among the blurred impressions of his arrival, came over to shake his hand.

"I didn't know that you were going to be here, Eliot. This is a pleasure. Come around to see me Monday. Have you known Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley long?"

"No, not long. And listen, Mr. Parker, if anyone should try to tell you I was not invited, it is not so, I was. You can understand that, can't you?" Mr. Parker didn't know whether he could or not. Eliot escaped to his room. He wasn't unnerved, he assured himself, merely wanted time to dress leisurely for dinner. The valet was perfect. Everything was laid out. After steaming in a hot bath, he felt better. He puffed at his pipe while leisurely dressing, picturing beautiful debutantes in the smoke. Refreshed, he went down to dinner with courage and an appetite. In the living room, a cocktail buoyed his spirits to the ceiling. He felt in fine fettle. He should have feared the bursting of the bubble. Seated for dinner neither the appetite nor courage lasted a moment. The Eliot fellow was there, minus his gardenia, but nevertheless there, stealthily watching him from the other end of the table. He could not shake his eye, try as hard as he was able. He squirmed. After staring a long while in the other

direction, Joseph stole a glance back at Eliot. It was no use. That fellow's eye was still riveted upon him. Dinner was agony. He boiled. To all purposes he was in the water of his bath again, now scalding, his head under, stewing. His hostess was remarkable in that she did not call him the impostor that he was. Perhaps it was fear of a scene which caused her to extend him courtesy that he did not deserve. Anyway, he could no longer continue the pretense. He felt that everyone knew his secret. Directly dinner was over, he would have to make a clean breast of it all to Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley. He and Neonardo and the Hackney would go back from whence they had come.

"The right Mr. Eliot?" Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley replied, dumbfounded. "You are he. There is no other Mr. Eliot here."

"The invitation was meant for me!"

"Why, certainly. Didn't Louisa Neonardo tell you?"

"Louisa! Louisa! You know Louisa?"

"She gives me all my marcelles. She is coming tomorrow morning. I wonder why she didn't tell you?"

"Tomorrow — tomorrow morning — for — for marcelles?"

"No, no, socially for the week-end. When I invited her she asked me sweetly if you might be included, which I was very glad to do. Louisa and you are engaged?"

"Yes."

"She is a very lovely girl." Then it was that Eliot remembered reading that Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley

was noted for frequently inviting beautiful young girls of a totally different station in life from that of the other guests to her affairs. She encouraged the unusual, and her position was strong enough to carry her way. Wasn't it most natural that a lady who had made and unmade cabinets should be successful in setting aside some of the trivial conventions of entertaining, particularly when it was greatly to the pleasure of her guests to do so, Eliot thought. Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley had walked away. But Mr. Joseph Eliot was no longer embarrassed. The world to him had a new light. His invitation was bona fide, he was where he belonged, in the midst of luxury, elegance, and distinction, and because of Louisa. (He did not forget that.) From then on he mingled freely with the distinguished, and many thought him a charming young man. He took special delight in chatting with that slender gentleman, the Joseph Eliot of his nightmare.

Later Mr. Parker came up to him again. "I am glad ~~that~~ you are here, Eliot, and I am glad that you came the way you did. For what I was going to say before, Eliot, is this. I want you to write up your arrival with horse and gig. It will make the best interest story of the week. I will run it on the front page. Can you imagine the effect: 'Mr. Joseph Eliot' (give them my address as yours), 'a young man of one of our best families' (you can always put that in, you know), 'arrives at Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley's in a Spider drawn by a blue blood chestnut Hackney. Mr. Eliot's example is of only slightly less importance among high social

circles in this country than is that of the Prince of Wales in England,' et cetera, et cetera. Put it on thick. You know how. It will be a tremendous play for our paper. Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley's name is a by-word."

"I know it, that's just the trouble."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, I am very sorry, Mr. Parker, but I am afraid I can't do it. I am a guest of Mrs. Kingsley's."

"Trust my thirty years of newspaper experience, Eliot. It will not get you in wrong with Mrs. Kingsley. Quite the contrary. She will thank you for it. Her name all over the front page. She is not dumb. How can she take offense. It is in connection with no scandal. Why, she will welcome the publicity, and well she may. Spearmint with all its advertising will never be able to achieve such a spread. Believe me, Eliot. Of course, don't write the story in the first person. Tell about yourself all you desire. The more the better, but write it as if it were being composed by someone else. But then it is not necessary for me to caution you in regard to that."

"No sir."

Eliot saw very little of the debutantes. Louisa, as was promised, arrived the next morning. They were inseparable. She was ravishing. He thought he had bought clothes, but he had not been thinking in the quantities of a girl's wardrobe.

Saturday evening was slightly cloudy. Lake Michigan's waves could be heard splashing on the wet sand.

Sheridan Road curved in the distance. Sitting on the big stone to the right of the garage door, Neonardo sighed, and breathed deeply, as if he would inhale past escaping the beauty of the night.

Neonardo's daughter and Eliot walked away from the lake up the long gravel path, but Neonardo was not watching them. His nose was pointed to the moon, like that of a hound that barks at its mystery. They stopped at the arbor, vine covered, through whose crevices they watched Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley's guests, between dances, pouring out onto the lawn.

"Louisa, dear, why didn't you tell me that it was through you that I was invited here? Of course, I remember that you have told me many times of giving marcelles, but I had no suspicion that Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley was included in your work."

"She hasn't been long, just a couple of weeks."

"But why—"

"Well, I was going to. But that night you came over to see me, you were so proud of the invitation, and of Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley having heard of you, that I didn't have the heart to spoil it all for you by telling that she hadn't heard of you at all, and that I had arranged it. So I decided to wait."

"It's a wonder your father didn't let the cat out of the bag."

"He's not as stupid as you think, Joseph."

"I don't think he's stupid."

"Yes you do, sometimes. But I love you just the same."

They drove back together in the Spider Sunday night, with Mr. Neonardo on his seat of vantage in the rear, a combination chaperone and groom. There wasn't much however, that he objected to in either capacity. He was in excellent spirits. Never in his life had he been dined, wined, and fêted as he had been in the servants' quarters of the Chesterfield Kingsley Lake Forest mansion. "You go back once, taka me. Be sure, taka me."

Mr. Parker was right. The front page story immensely pleased Mrs. John Chesterfield Kingsley, and one Joseph Eliot (with Mr. Parker's address) found himself the recipient of many invitations to spend week ends at the various country homes and estates of lesser lights. And at the bottom were postscripts that generally read: "And do come as you did to Mrs. Chesterfield Kingsley's, with your carriage." But Joseph Eliot could not accept any of these. The long journey to Lake Forest and back was the last minuet of the Spider Phaeton. Its weary wheels had crumpled.

TOO MANY FLAGS

“Gotta fag, me lads?”

“Thank ee, mates, thank ee. Gord bless the King, me mates, Gord bless the King.”

The royalty shouter who had thus accosted us (a man in blue serge suit, worn almost to an open net work of shiny threads, and a dirty flannel shirt open at the neck) was about forty, I should judge, though his pinched face was more wrinkled than would be expected in most men of sixty. He was soaked with whisky, which, as is the case of many imbibers, while it staggered his legs, did not trip his tongue, but on the contrary seemed to add velocity to it.

It was in Vienna during the fall of 1921 at the time it took, for instance, nearly a hundred kronen (half a penny), to ride on a street car, and several thousand kronen (twelve cents), for an elegant meal, or a room at one of the best hotels; Vienna that laughed and danced while she starved, and that only allowed enough “time out” after the food riots to board up the smashed windows and sweep away the broken glass before going on with her merriment; in other words, the Vienna of champagne for thirty cents a bottle and the best box in the opera for half a dollar. Through the streets, all the pre-war drays, built with one long central shaft to be pulled by two big draft horses, were dragged with

great effort, and lop-sided effect, by single, lonely nags, whose bones stuck out so far, from months of semi-starvation, that it seemed they would soon cut through the skin. The other side, staying unattended, appeared as a spectre of approaching death to the remaining but worn out horse.

On the night Herb and I, Americans by nationality, were brought to a halt by the gentleman who had come staggering towards us down the broad Ring Strasse that encircles the inner city, to ask for a cigarette and shout for royalty, we were on our way back to the Bristol Hotel.

"God bless the King, you say?" I asked.

"Right you be," the threadbare royalty shouter replied.

"What king, may I ask? It is rather unhealthy, it seems to me, to yell for kings in Vienna since the war."

"Blimmee, no. It's never un'healthy to yell for the British King is it, me lad. And Gord bless ye both for good Englishmen. And I be a good British tar, and be goin on me way to Italy."

"Italy, did you say," Herb inquired.

"Rather. But I be a good Britisher. I be British to the backbone, and be damn proud of it . . . fought in the Battle off Jutland. But now, I gotta be getting on to Italy. Avee a thousand kronen to elp me make er with? Tis a Longish way, me lads."

"But my dear fellow—" Herb started to interjacculate.

"'Alf minute. Look me blokes, I be a good Brit-

isher. Long live King George." So saying, he pulled up his right sleeve, and there, conspicuously painted on his forearm, was the British Union Jack.

"But my dear fellow," Herb broke in, this time successfully, "we're not British, we are Americans."

"What! Americans? Listen kid, is that the straight dope?"

"Yes, we are Americans."

"So am I, bos. Welcome home. Welcome to our city. I'm a Connecticut man I am. Gob in the old Stars and Stripes navy. That's me, kid. You'd be surprised—why I wouldn't spit on the British. One of these British guys gave me two thousand kronen. I threw it back at his face. Keep up Uncle Sammy, kid, that's me every time, kid. Easy, neat and simple."

"You an American?" I said rather dubiously.

"Sure thing, bo. I'll tell the world I am. Yuse guys know the bowery, New York City."

"Well, not too intimately."

"The Bowery, New York City, kid. That's where I hang out. I run with that gang."

"Well, I took you for a Britisher. You certainly fooled me," Herb said.

"You bet cher bottom dollar, I'm American. Keep up Old Glory, that's me, kid. Keep up Uncle Sammy, that's me kid, that's me all over. Squint at this, bos." This time he pulled up his other sleeve, and revealed the American Eagle and the Stars and Stripes, as big as life. "Tis a long way to Italy," he went on. "Could you spare a guy a couple tousand kronen?"

"No, we're not that wealthy. Here's a thousand for you, though," Herb answered.

"Thanks for dee tousand. Buys 'einer' cigarette, at least," he said rather sarcastically.

"Well, here's another five hundred for you then."

"Thanks, bos."

"Gotta nother fag, by chance."

"Thanks, thanks. So long, then, bos, and keep up Uncle Sammy."

"Keep Up Uncle Sammy, Keep Up Uncle Sammy," kept floating back to us as he staggered off.

"That man goes under two flags, Jim," Herb said.

"Yes, and it seems to me that he does more toward the advancement of Anglo-American Friendship than many others who make such advocacy their life work."

"How do you figure it? Didn't you hear him say, Jim, that he would not spit on the British?"

"Yes, but my guess is that if we had said we were British he would have replied that he wouldn't spit on Americans, and thus in this way he himself has undivided allegiance between the two nations. Besides, he carries the flags of both, which is somewhat farther, you will have to admit, than the most enthusiastic advocates of Anglo-American unity have decided to go, as yet."

"Yes, Jim, and as a linguist he is not to be scoffed at, for he seems to get along better with several dialects than most professional imitators that I have heard, and this in spite of the fact that he was pretty well stewed."

"Oh, that just helps his tongue to slip along the

more easily. Just the same, the poor fellow must have spent a long time in picking up such apt and ready changes in language."

"Well, don't you see, he had to, they are the necessary accessories of his trade on which he places his hope of being convincing."

* * * *

Several days later we left Vienna. We were also bound for Italy. We had planned, however, to stop at Innsbruck on the way.

The first night we were at Innsbruck, a Saturday night, we were on our way to the large Coliseum, where we had heard practically the whole town gathered on Saturday nights in Carnival fashion, when who should we run into but our Vienna friend of the two flags, who staggered to a halt in front of us the same as before. As he gave no sign of recognition and made no mention of Vienna, it was evident that he did not remember us. Perhaps his inebriation, which it was now safe to judge was characteristic, assisted his loss of memory.

"Gotta fag, bos?" he began. After thanking us for the cigarette, he wasted no time in getting started on his speech of the "God bless America, I believe in Columbus, Keep Up Uncle Sammy" type that we had heard from him before.

No sooner had he commenced than Herb whispered aside to me, "To-night he has taken us for Americans. I am certain, however, that he does not remember us

. . . Let me do all the talking. An idea has just come to me with which I am sure I can stump him completely." Then he continued out loud, interrupting our friend, who was well launched on his long oration for the glory of the Stars and Stripes. "Wait a minute, WAIT A MINUTE! my good fellow; you have made a mistake. We're not Americans."

"Ah, British. Right you be, right you be, Sirs. I would not spit on an American, me lads. An American just offered me two thousand kronen. I threw it back in his face. Long live King George. Right you be, Sirs—but, tis a longish way to Italy."

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," Herb interrupted again, "we're not British either." "—That will get him," he said aside to me.

"Not English, not Americans! What are ye? Tis Irish ye oughter be. Though sure 'tis me and me colleen that was, would hardly have taken ye for sich. If Irish ye be tis me you should know. I believe in St. Patrick and De Valera, and all sich, and green's me favorite color. Tis glad I am ye are not British. Look, me coves."

He pulled back his dirty flannel shirt, and there, on his chest, was the green and gold flag of Ireland.

"You win, my friend," Herb said, as he gave him two thousand kronen, which, in order not to rate him too high for his philanthropy, it must be remembered was about the equivalent of twelve cents.

"Thanks, me coves.—Be ye going to the Coliseum?"

"Yes, we are heading in that direction."

"Hold on to your money, then, me coves. Don't let 'em get more than two drinks into ye. They're out to do ye dirt, the whole mother's pack of 'em. They got me, damn 'em."

After our friend had gone, having finished uttering his poignant but friendly words of advice and warning in regard to the dangers and pitfalls of the Innsbruck Coliseum on Saturday nights, I asked Herb why he had given up the fight, instead of going on to say that we were not Irish either, as he could most easily have done, and without his conscience troubling him much, I thought.

"Well, to tell the truth, I don't know about you, but I had no desire to see any other portion of his anatomy."

"What nationality do you think he really is, Herb?"

"As to that, I think it just one more case of 'God alone knows, and he isn't telling anybody.'"

"No, I mean, what do you guess? I have no idea myself."

"Neither have I, Jim. I don't doubt that if we were French, he would prove himself a very good Frenchman, and so on. However, it may be of some consolation to know that he can't lay very convincing claims to being a Chinaman; but even with that limitation definitely granted, it is my opinion that a thorough examination of him would disclose him to be far closer to the true internationalist than Trotsky."

Several years later, riding in a Manhattan subway, I came across the following at the bottom of a page.

PROFESSOR OF LANGUAGES A SUICIDE

Associated Press, Paris—The man in an old blue serge suit worn to an open network (and a dirty flannel shirt open at the neck), the Suicide of Rue Saint Honoré of last Thursday, was identified at the morgue today as Professor J. S. Senderston, who mysteriously disappeared ten years ago from a mid-west university of the States. Professor Senderston was often spoken of a decade past as the most brilliant student of languages and dialects in the annals of his Alma Mater. The mystery of his disappearance from the Campus ten years ago remained unsolved until his body, strangely tatooed with various flags, was identified today. In his pockets were found tiny dictionaries of thirteen different languages and short unfinished treatises on the language of the Aborigines and the slang of American Negroes. Also one old hat check—corners worn off—inscribed Innsbruck Coliseum, a Johnny Walker whiskey label, and an unusually long handled ivory back scratcher, tagged in shaky handwriting—Please return to the Chinese Museum, Peking!

It is thought. . . .

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I cut the half column out, and sent it to Herb.

MR. HENRY SHELFORD'S ADVICE

I

Mr. John Terent, although he was not by any means practical and systematic to the exclusion of imagination and sentiment, had developed helpful theories about most things. There are some things, however, that do not occur often enough for anyone to have theories about. For instance, never before had Mr. Terent had an Engagement broken. Thus he had no system or precedent on which to fall back. In fact, although he was twenty-six, the present one was his first serious romance, which would probably be flippantly, and without much doubt incorrectly, guessed at by those of a facetious and rather sarcastic turn of mind as one of the main reasons why "his affair with Emily Lee" had not lasted. But that is neither here nor there. The fact that concerns us, and that intimately concerned Mr. Terent, was that he was no longer engaged, that for the last several days he had been absolutely free without desiring freedom. And, as he has been frequently heard to say since, "There is nothing so objectionable as unwelcome liberty."

He spent three nights of sleeplessness, and it must be said that this insomnia was not because of the tradi-

tional necessity of lying awake in order not to insult the importance of a broken engagement. The serious aspect of the situation was and always will be uppermost in Mr. John Terent's mind, and for this attitude he deserves all credit.

After many days of utter gloom, Mr. Terent deliberately decided to forget. That was all very well as a decision, but he immediately met with practical difficulties. The morning of his resolution, no less than any of the preceding mornings, found him reminded of Emily in everything he did and everywhere he turned. As he put on his blue suit, which he had not worn since the last time they were together, he noticed three or four long golden hairs that conspicuously clung in a haphazard manner to the right shoulder of the coat. It was impossible to avoid the memories that they vividly recalled. And then at breakfast, scrambled eggs most naturally (and justly, it might be added) caused the reflection that nobody could make scrambled eggs the way Emily could. And this in turn brought to mind one Sunday night when they had prepared supper together at her home, including scrambled eggs "that melted in your mouth;" that is, she had prepared supper while he watched, and then . . . In a desperate attempt to get his mind away from Emily he plunged determinedly into the "Chicago Tribune." It was no use—there before him in heavy type was one of the usual headlines: "Girl Breaks Engagement." Another reminder. Everything reminded him of Emily Lee. Was there no escape for him?

During the last three days he had not been at the office. This morning, however, in accordance with his definite decision to forget, he had resolved to return to the daily routine. Abruptly and doggedly reminding himself of this resolve, he threw down the offending Tribune, and, leaving his unfinished breakfast, started out at once. By sheer force of will (and by walking briskly) he succeeded in keeping Emily out of his mind while covering the short distance to the nearest corner at which the busses stopped. Once aboard the bus, however, things were no better. In fact, they were decidedly worse. Perhaps it was on this very bus that they had ridden one glorious morning not so long ago on their way down town to get an engagement ring, and once having thought of that, memories were again innumerable. They raced into his mind, one after another, two and three at a time, each suggesting one more, or often several. There was no escaping them—of the sweet trusting way she used to look at him, the almost childlike promises to be always faithful to each other, their plans for the future, the pretty gold of her hair and clear blue of her eyes, the way she had of nodding her head, the flats and bungalows they had looked at together, the many . . . He brought himself up with a sudden jerk. This was no way to forget. But what should he do? He could not go to the office. That he saw plainly. Would it be a good idea to go see his closest friend, confide in him, ask his advice? It might possibly do him a little good to confide in someone.

II

"And she broke the engagement. Ah! bad luck, John. That's bad luck."

"I know that, Henry," John said irritably. "Don't tell me again. That's about the fifth time you have repeated it this morning. I've come to you for advice."

"Quite so. Quite so. Only I wanted to let you know that I understand exactly how you feel . . . that is—I mean to say—I can imagine how you feel."

"Yes, certainly."

"Advice. Let's see. Why I think the best thing to do, the only sensible thing to do would be to . . . "

"Yes, yes, tell me," John interrupted anxiously.

"Would be to forget her," Mr. Henry Shelford continued. "Put her out of your mind. Forget her en—"

"I know, I know; I can't do that; I have tried."

"How long?"

"This morning. All this morning. No use, everything reminded me of her."

"Reminded you." Shelford hunched his chair closer. "Just a minute. Wonder I didn't think of it before. It is what I—I mean a friend of mine—did in a similar case."

"Yes, what is it? What did he do?" John interrupted beseechingly.

"Well, he came to confide in me about—about the same—same sort of thing you have. Of course, I am not giving any names."

"No, no. What was it you told him to do?"

"I told him to spend a week in revisiting all the places where he and his sweetheart had been together. Then, the week over, there were no new memories to confront him. Any that did return later, don't you see, had the edge taken off them. I suggest it for you. Stay away from your office for a week to do it."

"Let's see, let's see—spend a week in revisiting—I believe you have hit it. An attempt to get everything over in seven days," John said.

"Yes, it is rather severe for the one week, but it is a good plan," John's friend answered.

"It might be a good thing to try—I will do it."

"Oh yes, I don't know—perhaps this is not necessary—but I think it is the best idea to leave the places that will bring up the severest and most aggravating memories to the last day or two of the week. In that manner, don't you see, you will stand the best chance of bringing on a desired reaction immediately."

"No, Henry, I do not believe there is a chance for a reaction, but I will carry it out the way you suggest."

III

Mr. Terent had fully anticipated that it would be a hard week. It was harder. In the geographical aspect alone it was difficult. There was practically all Chicago to go over, not to mention several short excursion trips. And the climate—it was now November. This made going across Lake Michigan to Michigan City and back, not as pleasant from a climatic point of view

as when he had made the trip with Emily one sunny day in the middle of June. But it was not the geographical nor climatic conditions that made the week hard for John. No, it was the moon shining on Lake Michigan; and the night, Wednesday night, that there was a lone star in the sky. In the beach sand were the ashes of a fire over which Emily had broiled steaks and he had roasted marshmallows, burning several of them as he watched a wisp of her pretty golden hair fall over her forehead or noticed the shadows of the fire flames play on her face. It was such things as these, bringing with them hundreds of memories, that made it hard for John.

The last two nights, Sunday night and Monday night, were the most tearing and wrenching of all.

Sunday night he went down to the North Western Railroad Station, where he had wished Emily good-bye, the only time that they had been separated during all the last year. It was the time she had left to spend a month with relatives in Colorado. He had boarded the train with her, which stood on track nine. He remembered that well. And the last long fervent kiss when she had clung to him as if she meant never to let him go. It was after the train had slowly started and after the colored porter had drawled—"Yas Sah, you have got to get off. She is goin' never to come back no more."

Ominous words. At the time he had thought little of them. He had read somewhere that "colored folk" were unusually gifted in premonitions. He well believed it now, he reflected ironically.

IV

Monday night he went to the Riverview Amusement Park. The last time that they had been there together was on the first night of their engagement. She had worn a most becoming new black dress set off with a white lace collar and a black toque, all of which he had liked so well. The beauties and memories of that night now passed before his eyes with taunting irony. How frightened she had been to go on the Royal Gorge and The Jack Rabbit. Yet she had finally consented when she saw how disappointed he would be if they could not include them. While she was still terrified by the many sharp curves and fast perpendicular falls of the Jack Rabbit, she had said that they must take no more chances because they both had each other and all their future happiness together to live for. He had laughed at this. "The idea of the Royal Gorge and the Jack Rabbit being too dangerous," but way down in his heart he agreed.

Then he had bought her a bag of "hot creamy buttered and salted popcorn, right off the fire," because she liked popcorn. He pretended he liked it that night, for the very fact that she enjoyed it seemed miraculously to improve its taste for him.

John made the complete rounds of the Park, going everywhere they had been together; a solitary figure going through the Thousand Isles, where he was forced to take a seat behind a soldier who had a girl on either side of him. The soldier stealthily kissed the girl on his

right going through the first tunnel and as stealthily kissed the girl on his left going through the second. Again a solitary figure, merely for the sake of religious repetition, tossing rings for a doll or pocket knife, and throwing baseballs, five chances for a dime, in an attempt to give "The Niggers a Bath." Even when he successfully sunk one big fellow into the high tub of water, John did not smile.

After completing the rest of the tour of the Park, he went last of all to that which it was most difficult for him to face, to the mammoth Ferris Wheel with a "Hundred Swings" attached to it. He stood a long time watching it, thinking how, demurely taking his hand "that night," as they were passing this spot, Emily had whispered, "Let's go on The Ferris Wheel, John," adding sweetly in even more of a whisper, "and if you want to, you can kiss me every time our swing gets to the top."

He stepped back rapidly a few paces to get a better view of what he thought was perhaps the very swing in which they rode, and on the wooden back of which they had carved their initials. In doing so he bumped heavily into someone. He turned round. It was a girl with whom he had collided. "I beg your pardon, Miss, I am very sor— Emily! Emily, it's you?"

"John!"

"Oh! Why, Emily, how do you happen to be here. Oh I—"

"I must go right away," Emily replied, "I have got to—"

"No—wait—please—Emily."

"Yes."

"You were looking at the Ferris Wheel, too, Emily?"

"Yes. I didn't see you, John."

"And if I had not bumped into you—dear;" he spoke "dear" timidly and rather inquiringly.

"Yes," she said expectantly.

Her "yes" reassured him. "Dear," he continued, "I would not have seen you, either."

"Oh."

"Emily, will you ride on the Wheel with me again—once more?"

"Yes."

John took her arm and felt, he could not be mistaken, that she swayed slightly towards him as they walked. "Please tell me truthfully, Emily, did you come here alone tonight just to see this Ferris Wheel and to think of the last time that we were here together?" he asked half boldly, half pleadingly.

She nodded her head shyly and blushed. Then murmured, "Yes," so gently that John could scarcely hear her.

"Oh, Emily," he said, pressing her arm closer to him.

"John, you haven't noticed."

"Noticed?"

"My—"

"Oh yes I do, I do now. You are wearing the same black dress and white lace collar and hat that I always liked so much, and that you wore that—that night we were here together."

She nodded her head the same way she had always nodded it and smiled. After they had climbed into the swing and the attendant had come around and locked them in, they thought it would be a good idea to see if it was the same one on which they had carved their initials; but it wasn't. However, they decided to find the carved one, "our swing," for the next ride, and John suggested that they clasp hands on this decision, and then forgot to suggest that they unclasp them—and so they started up. When they were a good way off the ground, John leaned closer to Emily and asked that which he had been trying to get the courage to ask ever since the swing they were in had commenced to rise.

"And Emily, when we get to the top, may I—may I kiss you?"

"Yes."

"And, Emily, we are almost there."

"Yes."

* * * * *

Later that night, nearing Emily's home, John told her that he no longer had any belief in the ominous sayings of negro porters, or their ability to predict the future, and whether she knew what he was referring to or not, she smiled contentedly as she had at everything else that he had said that evening.

QUEEN OF HEARTS

I

A beautiful girl, tall, slender, the grace of youth in every movement, was strolling through the Pondelick Sanitarium for the Insane. She was, however, in complete possession of her senses. Her interest in asylums was psychological and scientific. The interest of Dr. Lennox, by her side, was in his work. At present he was evidently taking pride in his knowledge of the insane, while fulfilling his promise to Miss Julia Hance of showing her through the Asylum.

"Miss Hance, was there ever anyone in your family who was insane?"

"Why—Dr. Lennox!"

"No offense; I only meant—"

"Most certainly not!"

"Ah, you misunderstand. It would be better for you if there had been someone."

She looked at him searchingly; he seemed serious.

"You see, if you had known someone slightly demented, you would have advance knowledge to enable you to comprehend certain phases of insanity. Say, a husband for instance. You could have observed him intimately. Never mind—it is just as well."

"I should think so," she said quietly.

And thus they made the round, observing the inmates of the Asylum, Dr. Lennox talking volubly. Miss Hance, in spite of her attempt to achieve a professional attitude, found herself extremely interested in the personal side of each case. She was fascinated by the man who claimed that he was Napoleon, and the woman who persisted while speaking of Queens and court receptions in energetically scrubbing the floor. Napoleon was particularly determined. He kept shouting again and again, "If I hadn't had a headache, I would not have lost at Waterloo." Miss Hance began to wish that he had been demolished at Waterloo, but was immediately sorry for her hardness.

Her feminine sympathy and pity were aroused for everyone. In addition she could not help being somewhat proud of the American Heroes; especially George Washington, a very large man with flaxen hair and an over serious smile, who daily insisted on crossing the Delaware. However, when Miss Hance and Dr. Lennox arrived, Washington was simply rallying his forces.

"Well," said Dr. Lennox, "I believe that ends our little journey. I have taken you through all the corridors one is permitted to visit."

"I don't know where to begin to thank you."

"Don't thank me at all. It has been a pleasure. There is, however, come to think of it, something more, if you would care to, that you may see."

"Today?"

"No, tonight. Then it is that you would have a

chance to study these people closely. I won't be here myself, I'm sorry, but—let me see—yes, I can arrange it for you." She looked at him inquiringly. "You see, we are having a dance here tonight."

"Not for—not for them?"

"Yes. It is part of the new idea for restoring mental balance. An aspect of our new thought scheme in asylum work. Of course, the violent cases are not permitted to attend. There will be many who are under the illusion that they are someone else, but none of those present will be dangerous; you will find them very cordial, and extremely talkative."

Miss Hance hesitated. All pronounced eccentricities in her dancing experience had been confined to the orchestras. A dance of the insane might be akin to the warring scalp celebrations of Indian Chiefs. Yet Dr. Lennox had assured her that "they" all would be harmless. It certainly would be an excellent opportunity to continue her research and study. And then it would give her the chance to create a sensation among her friends. She could say, "I have danced with men, my dear, who are actually insane." Her friends would look astonished, unbelieving. "Yes," she would continue convincingly, "insane."

All curiosity would be focused upon her. "Do tell us more. Did any of them attempt to hurt you? What did they say? How did you feel?" Vanity as well as scientific interest helped her to decide; and it is not out of the way to repeat that a little vanity in Miss Hance was certainly justifiable.

II

She found herself that evening the center of an admiring, attentive group. She had all the popularity that belongs to a tall, pretty stranger. Certain sets in society have the attitude of the English crook who, when asked about the identity of a new face, quickly answered, "'E's a stranger—throw arf a brick at 'im on general principles." But there is no snobbishness among the insane. They accepted Miss Julia immediately as one of their number. There were frequent heated disputes as to who was to dance with the lovely stranger. Napoleon, proving that he was a man of action, ended one of these squabbles by seizing her and waltzing away with an abruptness that left his opponents flat-footed. When safely in the center of the floor, he proved to be surprisingly gentle. This phase, however, was not to last long. "I am Napoleon," he began in a quiet, rather timid voice.

"Yes," replied Miss Hance, thinking the while that insanity ought to be humored in the same way that one humors childish old people. Thus she was careful to keep her voice free from incredulity.

Napoleon, nevertheless, was certain, from always having been doubted, that there was disbelief in her answer. "Yes, I am," he bellowed, stopping the dance to slam his foot on the floor.

Miss Hance shook nervously. "Yes, of course you are," she said as soothingly as she could.

This pacified the great Napoleon. From then on he

was very pleasant and sociable in his own way. He did not brag of his military conquests; he never mentioned Austerlitz nor his campaign in Italy; and upon being questioned—except for knowing that he had had a headache—even proved to be very vague about Waterloo. He enjoyed waltzing, which he did very well. His chief concern was the innumerable mosquitoes that buzzed around his head. It was the middle of winter. But Miss Hance made no mistake. She agreed enthusiastically.

Each new partner, before many steps, invariably introduced himself. Several retained their own names. The vast majority were convinced they were notable characters from history, literature, the Bible, or a deck of cards.

In the course of events, Miss Hance found herself with George Washington. Telling of his military exploits, he suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence to ask who she was. She gasped a moment, perplexed. "I have no name."

"Don't be silly," he replied gently, "think. You must have a name. Every thing has a name. Even the fish in the seas have names. The very stars in the heavens have names. Think and you will remember it."

The deck of cards seemed the best solution. "I am the Queen of Hearts," she replied blandly.

George Washington seemed well satisfied. The name was really most appropriate. "Queen of Hearts," he repeated, "Queen of My Heart." She looked at poor George Washington in a way that was sure to indicate

that he had made a mistake and must be careful. Washington, however, was undisturbed. He was much vaguer than his words indicated. He continued to babble along in a manner closely akin to delirium.

Entering with simplicity into the spirit of the occasion, Julia told each one her name at the start of the dance; and a very popular and much talked of Queen of Hearts she was.

Late in the evening she was dancing with a man whom she had not noticed before. "I am the Queen of Hearts," she began.

"Oh are you?" he said.

"And who are you?" She had learned that such frank inquisitiveness was the order of the night. This man, however, seemed to resent it.

"That's very strange," he said at last, "your being the Queen of Hearts because I am the King of Hearts."

Here, indeed, was a complex situation that might be fraught with danger. As the King of Hearts showed no immediate signs of taking advantage of their relationship, she continued bravely with the conversation.

"Have you been the King of Hearts long?" she asked.

He raised his eyes with a strange glance. "No," he said, "just a short time, a very short time." Then he contradicted himself abruptly. "No, of course—what am I thinking of—I have been the King of Hearts always. Pardon me just a minute—no offense—I can't go on talking till you push that hair pin back that is falling out on the right side. There you are—upsets me, you know. And that pin on your waist. I don't

want to annoy you, but please straighten it. Oh yes," he went on rapidly, "have you been the Queen of Hearts long?"

"All my life," she replied confidently, and it was easy to believe her.

The King of Hearts had drifted again. He switched the conversation with the rapidity of lightning. The fact that her handkerchief protruded from one of her long sleeves more than an eighth of an inch upset him terrifically. He said that the sight of more than an eighth of an inch of handkerchief threw his whole body into intense physical pain. Under his direction Miss Hance carefully rearranged it. He was a tall lanky man with lips that twitched nervously, and eyes that darted here and there, startled, bewildered, like a frightened fawn. He had a habit of taking a deep breath through his mouth, and then throwing his head way back, as if he were a swimmer about to smooth out his pompadour by ducking. He generally completed the illusion by immediately running his hand over his black hair. His dancing proved rather eccentric. He was inclined to stumble, especially when he plunged his head.

Miss Hance felt very sorry for him; her interest centered on his case. She asked as sweetly and kindly as she could, "How do you happen to be here?"

"Here," he replied blankly.

"Yes," she said, ignoring for the time being that she was supposed to be one of their number, "here, here with all these other people." His suspicions, however, were not aroused.

"Here, here with all these other people," he repeated dumbly. Evidently, "with all these other people" did not help him much.

Probably, Miss Hance thought, he was one of that vast majority of insane who do not realize that they are afflicted. It was really very foolish of her to ask. Yet she felt such keen sympathy, and even friendship, for this tall, awkward, distracted man, that she wanted to find out all that she could about him. In one sense, he seemed so much worse off than the others. Most of them were absorbed with the bravado and glitter of their assumed personalities. They believed implicitly in their make believe. It gave them an anchor. But with this poor man, being the King of Hearts was apparently a side issue. His absorption was in things that were out of place, and sumless other trivialities of similar nature—all of which annoyed him insufferably. His mind flitted around like a stunned butterfly. Yet Miss Hance believed she detected in its dissipated and incoherent workings that which once had been a brilliant and clever intellect.

Certainly the insane are objects of marked interest to all of us. It is intriguing for one thing, to wonder how we should act and talk if we were in their situation. In other words, in what form the madness that is asleep within us would find its expression, she thought, as the couplet,

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied,

And thin partitions do their bounds divide,"

ran through her mind. Then there is the additional

interest in the cause and development of their insanity. It was this last, as she dwelt on it, that was particularly absorbing to Miss Julia; especially in a man who, for some reason or other, singularly fascinated her.

The King of Hearts seemed to be coming to light. "Why am I here?" you ask. Here, Here, Ah Here," he said with difficulty, frowning in an effort to concentrate. Miss Hance waited expectantly. He, however, was silent. The light was very low, flickering. The only promising sign was that he was still frowning and had not commenced to talk about anything else.

Miss Hance attempted to fan the dying flame. "Yes, here," she said encouragingly. "In here it is different from the outside world. Why are you here?"

"The outside world, I know." Then he spoke in a tone that indicated he was repeating words that he did not believe. "Inherited, father, grandfather, me."

"Ah," said Miss Hance. Her voice was a trifle too enthusiastic. Here was the added delight of inheritance.

"And you?" he asked, jerking his head around.

"Inheritance too," she replied. "Have you been here long?" His mind was wandering. He wanted to dance over to the side of the room in order that he might adjust two curtains to the same level. She drew him back to himself with a more emphatic tone.

"Have you been here long?"

"Always."

"Really?"

"No, since I was twenty-five. I used to be a lawyer—law—lawyers—defense of—"

"How old are you now?" she interrupted.

But the concentration had been too much for him. He was off on sixty-three subjects. He didn't know, he interjaculated between a remark on his tie and the color of the shade cord. Miss Hance had to be content with surmising that he could not be more than thirty. His monologue, after racing out on innumerable tangents, the thought of no one of which he left complete, finally got back to his being the King of Hearts. They were dancing in a corner of the room.

"The Queen of Hearts," he uttered sentimentally, switching with characteristic abruptness from a spasmodic oration on dandelions, "and I am the King of Hearts." Then he suddenly pulled her closer to him and kissed her violently, her lips, cheeks, eyes, hair. At last she was able to break away. She ran, terrified. He did not follow.

Her first thought was to report him to one of the sanitarium officials. She decided no. To report him would simply mean punishment for that which he could not help. That would be unfair. However, she had had enough of being surrounded by the insane. She left at once.

III

Two days later, while shopping in town, she passed the King of Hearts. He was walking briskly, his lips were not twitching, his eyes had none of the appearance of a frightened faun. He turned to stare after

her, uncertain; she turned to stare at him. They both turned scarlet.

Naturally she was incensed. "You are not——"

"No," he admitted unwillingly.

"You have no right not to be," she said, stamping her foot.

"I am very sorry," he replied, "that I fooled you, although at the time, it seemed to me the best thing to do; for really, you were having so much pleasure in studying insanity that I thought it might spoil the continuity of your evening to suddenly find out that you were dancing with someone normal."

"Oh, you were normal enough!" she exclaimed impulsively. Then, "Why did you do that?"

"Oh, I don't know, really. I beg——" The King of Hearts stood with his mouth wide open, unable to say another word. Beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. Some trickled down to his eyes. His vision was blurred, his feet were heavy, his knees were stiff.

"But how did you happen to be there?" she asked rather kindly, for some reason feeling a trifle sorry for him in his distress.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "I am an attending doctor there, a member of Dr. Lennox's staff. I was in charge that night."

Her anger returned. "I think it was very inconsiderate of Dr. Lennox not to have warned me that his 'friends,' members of his staff, were going to be present."

"Well, he undoubtedly thought there was no reason for warning you about me. You can easily understand that ordinarily I take no part in the evening, except to act as medical attendant. But, when I saw you, I could not resist the temptation." This did not seem to help the situation. She did not reply. There was a long frozen silence.

"May I come to see you sometime?" he bolted desperately.

A gasp of surprise from Miss Hance; she smoothed out her gloves, although they did not need smoothing. Finally she raised her eyes. "Yes," she replied with some hesitation. And then with a smile: "But not with the privileges of the King of Hearts."

That was to be later.

A WISE THING IN THE MAN

— — — — —, — —, although it is a long while since I first heard it, still stands out separately and distinctly in my memory. It is chiefly concerned, like the vast majority of the others, with a girl, but in this case such a girl, such an unusual girl. She gave the story a flavor which made it the most interesting, I believe, that I have ever heard, and as I have said before, I have heard many.

* * * * *

Alice Rand was the only daughter of wealthy parents. Like a great many wealthy people who have no desire to make more money, they lived in California; to be exact, in Los Angeles. The fact that Alice's parents were wealthy did not spoil her in the least. She detested being pampered and petted. She cared nothing for clothes; in fact she preferred her old dresses to new ones. This worried her mother. Poor lady, after she had spent a great deal of her time in thoughtfully buying clothes for Alice, "that would be appropriate to her age," it was disappointing to see her daughter show no interest in the fine things selected for her.

Alice did not care for the boys, either, that is, in the usual way. She liked to play ball with them, but she

did not enjoy dancing with them at parties. No wonder her mother worried. A daughter that shows no interest in boys or dresses is enough to make any mother worry.

Alice deserted dancing school successfully every Saturday afternoon to play "indoor" with the "gang" in John Thorne's back yard. Thus the boys, with the exception of Harry Rendall, never thought of Alice in the way they thought of other girls, and her thoughts about them were equally devoid of sentiment. She was too much of a tomboy to arouse any romantic interest; a characteristic, however, that caused them to give her their unmitigated respect, especially since she could throw a baseball farther and faster than most of them. For that matter, she could throw twice as far as Harry Rendall, but then Harry was no athlete. His one consuming interest, apart from his friendship with John Thorne, with whom he was constantly to be found, was Alice; an interest which she in no sense returned. In fact, she had no sympathy with Harry's intense case of worshipful puppy love, something that she had never experienced, and for that matter never did experience. She would have had a great deal more respect for Harry if he had been a half-back on the high school football team, or capable of stroking a fast Lawford over the net. As it was, she could not be expected to hold anybody in esteem whom she could beat easily in straight sets.

In view of the fact that their interests and temperaments were so different, the close companionship be-

tween Harry and John, which lasted all through high school and college, was very remarkable. John gave no recognition to restrictions. His intention was to see life, to get every pleasure and experience that it could afford. Harry worried about him because of this, and John worried about Harry because of his interest in Alice. He thought, with the legitimate concern that every man has in the love affairs of another, that Harry should bestow his affections on someone who was far more modest, demure, and characteristically feminine than Alice.

It is true, Alice was not feminine in the generally accepted definition of the term. She loved freedom and independence too much to be content with basking her toes by the family hearth. She was extremely moody and temperamental, which perhaps was the main reason why she liked music, and devoted so much of her time to it. She was not, however, the moody type of person that spends hours in morose meditation. Her moods were lively; they ran the entire gauntlet of human imagination; they demanded sincere interpretation and appropriate expression. Thus, there were times when the sight of a turbulent, foaming ocean caused her to take off her shoes and stockings and run up and down on the wet sand, that was washed over by the highest and most energetic waves. That there were people present made not the slightest difference, she was entirely oblivious of them; and there were other times when the sight of a silent ocean made her quiet and contemplative. At such times she would often build a

fire on the seashore and sit in solitude for hours with dreams inspired by the flames and ashes.

These inclinations did not leave her as she grew older; rather they were intensified, nor was she ever embarrassed by them. At nineteen she would run barefooted along the ocean shore as free from selfconsciousness as when she was nine. Thus it was very difficult for people to understand Alice.

The older ladies generally agreed in whispers which did not carry above the squeak of their rocking-chairs, that she ought to be steadied and subdued by the cares and responsibilities of marriage.

Alice, however, was not disturbed by the fact that people did not understand her, nor was she troubled that she could not understand herself. In fact, she made no attempt to, she felt no need to.

She was not given to self analysis; that is why no sincere observer could accuse her of affectation. She was entirely devoid of selfconsciousness. She felt innumerable forces, sometimes contradictory, sometimes in accord, that irresistibly demanded interpretation.

As the years went on, Harry's love for Alice showed no signs of abating. In high school he had loved Alice; in college he still loved her; his latter affection, of course, being the more sincere and ardent because of its maturity. The fact that she felt no desire to reciprocate his love did not in the least lessen his faithfulness.

It was not until April in their senior year in the University that Harry persuaded John to take any interest in Alice. It had always worried Harry that the two

people whom he thought more of than anybody else should practically be at swords' points.

John, having nothing to do one night, at last reluctantly surrendered to Harry's persistent entreaties to go out with them. John felt that he would be insufferably bored; he was more than skeptical about deriving any happiness from being with Alice, and, besides, triangular occasions had never been at all to his liking.

It was a beautiful evening; full moon, most of the stars out, the plash of waves on wet sand, a smouldering fire, slender pines, the tall sentinels that guarded the top of a bluff near-by.

"You know, Harry, I actually enjoyed being with Alice and you tonight," John said after they were alone.

"Knew you would, if you would give yourself half a chance."

"You did? Well, I didn't. Never thought any triangular association could be enjoyable."

"Well, is that all you can say?"

"What do you mean?"

"Haven't you changed your mind about Alice?"

"Yes, I have."

"Well, how was I to know? You haven't said anything about it."

"She has intelligence and is natural."

"Pretty cold-blooded estimate."

"Not at all—I say, pardon me, Harry, are Alice and you engaged?"

"No. She won't hear of anything like that. In fact, she does not even allow me to see her very often."

"Oh."

The next day during history lecture John spent a long time on a note before he handed it to Alice.

"Dear Alice:

"Last night was a revelation to me—I have to admit that before we started out I was very dubious about the compatibility of any triangle, even for companionship. You see I had never experienced one before in which there was not an element of antagonism from at least one side. I have read about the congenial relationship for all three in the association, free from jealousy, of Lady Hamilton, Lord William Hamilton, and the great Admiral Nelson, but I thought that what I had read was a perverted history of the affair, colored for the benefit of the modern newspaper story. Now, however, I am more inclined to believe it. Yet, I am still convinced that harmonious triangles are very rare; you and Lady Hamilton must have a genius, an uncommon genius, in that respect. Certainly my disposition, ordinarily competitive and jealous, could not have made last night possible. To your naturalness, poise, and impartial consideration, then, belongs the entire credit. What I considered impossible was accomplished. So again, Alice, I say, you and Lady Hamilton.

"John."

Alice laughed over the note; she liked it.

That was in April. Before graduation in June, Alice

and John were engaged. The fact that he had been rather free and unrestrained at times in the past did not damp her affection for him, or lessen her opinion of him. That he gave up his old habits was all that she asked. John consented to this with alacrity. Instead of going to San Francisco every so often for a riotous week-end, he spent his time with Alice. It was a glorious time for both of them, that month after graduation, before he left for the Artillery Training Camp. That which John particularly noticed in Alice during this month, and admired above everything else, was her recklessness, unconventionality, and love of absolute freedom. She never observed customs. The times when she did not desire to leave John, she didn't, that was all. Frequently because of this she did not get home until three or four o'clock in the morning. It was great sport to open the front door without allowing it to squeak, and then to climb up the stairs in stocking feet. If she found mother at the top, she just laughed.

Certainly she did not permit mother's insistence on a conventional engagement to influence her. It would have been foolish, it would have been the admitting of wrong where there was none.

One night, however, John did not bring her home until five o'clock.

"Sure, Alice, that you can go in this late?"

"Certainly. What else can I do?"

"Don't know. I should have insisted on getting you back earlier."

"Don't be ridiculous. I didn't want to come."

"All right. See you tomorrow."

Alice did not go in. She had grave misgivings about the wisdom of going in; yet she had no money with her with which to stay at a hotel. Five o'clock in the morning is more than two hours later than three. Her mother would never understand. A plan suddenly came to her. As soon as John was out of sight, she half ran, half walked, to the large garage where her father boarded his car. The night foreman was too surprised to reply when she asked him for permission to sleep in one of the cars. She took his acquiescence for granted, however, and chose to sleep in the hearse, simply because it was the only one that allowed her to stretch out comfortably at full length.

John laughed proudly when she told him about it the next day. It was such ingenuity, originality, and freedom from conventional superstition, that he particularly admired in her.

Poor Harry! The engagement of John and Alice was a terrible shock to him. It was the last thing that he expected. He had never imagined that Alice was the type of girl that would appeal to John.

Of course, he was glad to see that John had volunteered to give up San Francisco Bourbon and Sherry, and little San Francisco milliners and manicurists for Alice. He was glad to see him reform, certainly, but why hadn't he reformed before? He himself had pointed out to him long ago that several of his San Francisco affairs had reached a stage in which they were more than alarming.

Harry's friends advised him to forget Alice, to seek pleasure from meeting new people. They argued that the real enjoyment of life comes from variety and the plural, with occasional incidental concentration, perhaps, merely for the sake of enlightenment. But Harry, unfortunately, was not one of those men to whom every good looking girl gives a new hope in life.

During the war, in order to be as near John as possible, Alice studied music in New York.

Two days before the Armistice was signed, (Alice had already commenced to dream of meeting him on the Hoboken Pier as he got off the returning troop ship) John was shot down.

For three months Alice refused to see anybody. She tried to forget by wearing the ends of her fingers off on the piano keys. Such an attempt was, of course, a failure. It neither destroyed the beauty of her fingers, nor allowed her to forget. Then the old, unconquerable desire for freedom returned, only now it was intensified by the reckless disregard for consequences that so often accompanies deep sorrow.

She persuaded another girl, Jane Steel, to whom she had been attracted during the last month in New York because Jane had also lost her fiance, to drive back to California with her. Alice bought a Ford, in which the two girls, with the sole protection of a couple of empty pistols, drove clear across the continent alone. During the trip, they both made many solemn vows never to marry. Alice, particularly, was certain that she never would.

That summer Alice went to the Hawaiian Islands, alone. She refused to allow anyone to go with her, nor did she grow tired of her solitude, for she was gone five months.

The day after she got back, Harry Rendall, who had just received his discharge from the army, phoned. "Hello, Alice?"

"Harry! Haven't heard your voice in two years."

"Nor—have—I—heard—"

Alice was distinctly embarrassed by the affectionate tone in which he started to speak. It was objectionable to her. She therefore interrupted quickly. "How are you?"

Harry did not even make a pretense of replying to that. He evidently had more important things to talk about, and he certainly wasted no time in coming to them. "Listen, Alice; I want you to go out to dinner with me tonight, then we can go to the movies afterwards. It will do you good."

"Just a minute. Hold the line."

As if she were afraid her thoughts could be heard, Alice put her hand over the mouthpiece of the phone.

She did not want to see Harry. It would be uncomfortable. Besides, she was not in the least bit interested in him. Moreover, to be perfectly frank, she did not like the commanding inflection of his voice. She particularly resented the professional, prescribing tone of "It will do you good." Still, why not go? Perhaps, out of mere kindness to Harry, she ought to see him once.

"All right, Harry."

"Good. I will be there at six." As soon as the receiver had clicked, she regretted her consent. Well, she would make it clear to him that she could not see him again; that she did not desire to receive any attentions whatsoever from men.

The dinner up to dessert was awkward. There were long embarrassing pauses. Harry shoved aside his chocolate pie with a determined gesture.

"Why, Harry, I thought you liked pie?"

"I do, but I want to talk to you now."

"Oh."

Harry was sitting bolt upright on the edge of his chair, nerving himself for an attack against innumerable odds. He placed both his elbows on the table, and leaned toward Alice with his chin supported by his hands. He talked rapidly, looking straight at her.

"Alice, why don't you marry me tonight?"

"What!"

"Yes, instead of going to the movies, let's get married."

"Harry Rendall, look at me. Are you crazy?"

"I *am* looking at you, and I am *not* crazy."

Alice, realizing by the emphatic tone of his voice that he was actually serious, answered with a withering, disdainful glance, "You are, you must be. Why, Harry, you know that John was shot only—"

Harry, however, was not to be daunted. "I beg your pardon," he interrupted, "for speaking so abruptly and harshly. There was no disrespect for John in my sug-

gestion. You know that I always held John in the highest esteem, that I was his closest friend."

"Yes, I know that."

"Alice, you can't go on all your life denying the better part of your nature. No matter how deep your sorrow, and I don't doubt that it is as deep as any within human experience, there is only one way, and that is for you to marry."

"No. I don't believe it. Even if I did, why should it be you? I don't love you."

"Why shouldn't it?"

"I don't love you."

"That doesn't make any difference. It is improbable that you could love anyone, now, until after you had been married two years, and I am the logical person for you to marry. I was John's closest friend, and you were in love with him. Therefore, both missing John as we do, we are naturally drawn together; we cannot help having a lot in common."

"I can't marry anybody I don't love. You're talking foolishly, Harry, and you know it."

"I love you."

"You know that isn't sufficient."

"Don't see why not."

"Yes, you do. Marriage is too sacred to be accepted in that way."

"We can keep our marriage sacred, if you want to. It could be a Platonic marriage."

"You really mean you would be willing to marry me in that way?"

"Yes, I most certainly should. I am leaving for Chicago within a week to finish my last two years of medicine at Rush. We can get married tonight and leave together. You can study music there at the Chicago College of Music. You will have your allowance; I will have mine. We shall profit from an economical standpoint, if nothing else, by joining them and living together. We will keep our marriage Platonic until you grow to love me. If you do not, I will give you a divorce, if you desire it. You see, it will be a sort of experimental marriage, that is, for you."

"But, Harry, I know it is harsh of me to say so, but I am afraid I never shall love you."

"I will take my chance of that."

"Are you really willing to do that? Are you willing to marry me in this way with no hope that I shall fall in love with you?"

"Yes. I was the one who suggested it, wasn't I? Let's go out and hunt for a minister. *I have a license.*"

"Oh, you have? Wonder you were not so far-sighted as to provide a minister also," she said with good humored sarcasm that broke the intensity and made them both laugh.

Going out of the restaurant, just ahead of them, was a tall frock-coated man. Harry, after catching up with him, touched him on the shoulder and asked him if he was a minister. The man turned round sharply, scowled indignantly, and shook his head with unmistakable emphasis. It was apparent that he was highly displeased at being taken for one.

Fortunately, ministers were not as scarce as Harry's first attempt to capture one seemed to indicate.

* * * * *

It was three-thirty in the morning. Mr. Rand only got out of bed to answer the phone because he was afraid it would never stop ringing if he didn't.

Who in Hell could be calling at this time of night?

"HELLO!"

"Mr. Rand?"

"YES!"

"This is the Associated Press. Is it true that your daughter was married tonight?"

"What's that? My God!"

"Is it true that your——"

"*Oh, I heard you.* No it can't be so. She is here in bed."

"The license records show that one was obtained for her today to marry Mr. ——"

But Mr. Rand didn't hear any more. He had banged down the receiver to rush for Alice's bedroom.

"Alice! Alice!"

"Please stop shaking me, Daddy. I'm tired. What's the matter? What time is it?"

"Alice! You were not married tonight, were you?"

"Yes—to Harry Rendall." Without offering to say any more she at once rolled over to go to sleep again.

* * * * *

Naturally, Mr. Rand was considerably disturbed, as is the wont of a parent, by his daughter's sudden marriage; but if he had not completely forgiven Alice long before, it is certain that he did when, a year and a half later, she named his first grandchild after him.

PRACTICAL ROSES AND SENTIMENTAL SHOES

Many complimentary adjectives could be used in describing Helen Cutler, who had her nineteenth birthday a week before this story opens. Sufficient is it to say at the start—with which you will have to be contented for the time being—that she was pretty, and sweet, and charming, and *very romantic*.

We will have to go back a little—no, not as far as that—not more than a year or two.

Helen had been graduated—she was eighteen years old then—from Mrs. Maybee's Finishing School for Girls on the Hudson (a venerable institution of learning where "little Latin and less Greek"—in fact, where little of anything was taught, except such niceties as which side of a carriage to get out of and how to ask for bread in French) with "honorable mention," accorded, by the way, to all the graduates, and a prettily engraved diploma tied up with a pink ribbon, which ever since had graced the neck of her white angora cat—the ribbon, not the diploma. The diploma, thanks to the interest of Helen's mother in preserving such evidence of her daughter's erudition, as she spoke of it, was hanging neatly framed in Helen's bedroom, although Mrs. Cutler, who, it must be said, had been

tactfully yet emphatically opposed in this by Helen, would have liked to have seen it take a more conspicuous place in the parlor, especially as there was plenty of room for it there between the impressively framed Roman Forum, and the brilliantly colored basket of fruit, although this would have necessitated moving Venus and The Dying Gaul a trifle in order that the diploma could be better seen. One can never be so sure of Venus, but The Dying Gaul certainly would not have objected, for his numerous tasks, ranging all the way from holding down the blotter on the study desk in the library, or acting as one end of a book rack, to his present exalted but dangerous position on top of a pedestal in the parlor, must have made him thoroughly accustomed by this time to being moved frequently and on the slightest provocation. In fact, it is a wonder that his strenuous and manifold duties in the Cutler home did not prove too much for him, and finally end his centuries of suffering for all time.

Well, it is high time that we get back to the day "nearly two years ago" when Helen graduated from Mrs. Maybee's Finishing School. I am afraid we have wandered too far from it already, for really the Dying Gaul has very little to do with this story, although the mention of Venus is not without relevance. Unfortunately, however, the same cannot be said for the Roman Forum, and the less that is said of the Basket of Fruit the better.

Well, then, Helen left Mrs. Maybee's a highly romantic girl, imbued, if not with the desire for running

away with the family chauffeur (he happened to be a mild man of at least fifty with eight children), at any rate with marrying someone—she had no one particularly in mind at the time—who was “tremendously poor” and “gloriously romantic.” Then with a start of “wonderful romantic love alone” they could make their way *together* to “great heights.” She had no particular heights in mind either; but then, what difference did it make what heights they were? “They” would find some.

And now at nineteen she was as romantic as the day she had left Mrs. Maybee’s. She had had to compromise, however, on her fiancé being poor, for the gentleman, Mr. Thomas Thortel, whom she had accepted “just last night,” and it was now “only three o’clock of the following afternoon,” although having fulfilled all her desires in proving himself exceedingly romantic, was not “tremendously poor.” It ought to be said that for a while Helen had been undecided between Mr. Hilder Jennisson—who had not proposed as yet—and Mr. Thomas Thortel—who had proposed repeatedly. Now, however, that was all settled, and, although Mr. Jennisson, being a bond salesman, was the poorer of the two, it appeared to be settled against him, and mainly for the reason, as Helen thought and expressed it, that he had shown himself to be not in the least romantic.

Mr. Hilder Jennisson, however, was not aware of anything having been settled, for he had not heard (nor did he think it was in the least likely he would ever hear) of the acceptance of any of Mr. Thortel’s

numerous proposals. In fact, since Mr. Thortel had finally been accepted "just last night," what chance had he had of hearing. Thus it was that on the afternoon with which this story has modestly opened, Mr. Jennisson ran up the steps of Mrs. Cutler's home with his usual confidence, and rang the front door bell with three decisive staccato pokes, the same way as he always rang bells; emphatically and three times. Today, however, he was particularly emphatic, for *he* had made up his mind to propose. Now that he had made up his mind to it, all that was necessary to carry it out was to enter into the proposal with the same decisiveness, assurance, and confidence with which he sold bonds. Mr. Jennisson's confidence and assurance were habitual.

A trim little maid in black dress and white muslin apron—I have always read of such maids and have never seen one—led him into the parlor, whose general tone would have been a little bit too sober were it not that a touch of brilliant color was added by a conspicuously placed vase of two dozen American beauty roses, that had, as it happened, for their background the dark fawn curtain of the door that opened on to the side sun porch—a door which although not locked, was not used at present; for, winter being well on its way, it was too cold to bask with any degree of comfort on the sun porch. Helen, as tastefully dressed as always (she affected bright colors with successful ease), was nonchalantly reclining at one end of a comfortable lounge—which was really very comfortable considering that it was a parlor lounge—having just laid down

a novel that had been widely advertised as "A Story of Highly Romantic Love on the High Seas." Mr. Jennisson, intent on his purpose, entered the room maintaining the same brisk confidence he had displayed in climbing the steps. All started smoothly. Helen greeted him with smiles that could not be interpreted by Mr. Jennisson as expressing anything but approval and encouragement. So he planned to waste no time in hemming and hawing in the manner of other men, who were less sure of themselves (and far less schooled in the knowledge of the feminine heart).

"Helen," he began, "there has been something—that I have known for a long while—that I want to speak to you about now. It is simply this. I love you and I want you to marry me. Helen, I want you to marry me, will you?"

Helen was greatly moved and distressed, and turned her head away without answering. A long time passed in which she seemed entirely incapable of breaking the silence. This did not, however, cause the slightest worry in Mr. Hilder Jennisson—for he knew women. He waited patiently. At last she turned toward him again, and still very much moved, said,

"Hilder, I must be fair with you. I have been trying to decide whether I should tell you, for I had made up my mind to keep it secret—I wanted to keep it all to myself. But I must be fair—it is—"

"Ah, never mind, never mind, Helen. I forgive you magnanimously. I forgive you anything. I love you that much."

Much as Helen disliked to smile while receiving a proposal, this generous statement of Hilder's forced her to. "What is it that you forgive me, Hilder?" she asked.

"Why, what you were going to confess, of course. That sort of thing makes no difference to me," he said with some embarrassment caused by what he considered the delicacy of the conversation. "Tell me if you want to, if you must, but it makes no difference; I love you enough to forgive and forget anything," he ended up heroically.

"It is not 'anything' though, Hilder. It is not 'that sort of thing.' I was simply tempted to tell you that I can't marry you, but I cannot refuse you like that without giving the reason."

"Of course, you can't," he interrupted.

"Hilder, dear—it is hard for me to say—but I don't love you. Last night, in fact, I promised to marry Mr. Thortel." She pronounced "Mr. Thortel" with some embarrassment, and a slight tone of reverence.

Hilder was dumfounded. He got up and paced the room, coming perilously close to upsetting both Venus and the Dying Gaul in his agitation. His silence, however, was not as long as was to be expected. He was not the man to remain in the dark. "Mr. Thortel! Mr. Thortel? What? *Tom* Thortel? Why should you prefer him to me? I don't think much of Tom Thortel. But that is neither here nor there, I suppose."

"No, *it is not here nor there*," Helen exclaimed angrily. Up until this time, with the true concern of a

natural girl, who can not help feeling a little sorry for any man that is going to lose her, she had been very thoughtful of Mr. Jennisson. His last speech, however, had contained an opinion against her "accepted" fiancé, which had excited her far beyond the control which Mrs. Maybee had repeatedly cautioned it was at all times necessary to maintain in the presence of "young gentlemen." "*All right, Hilder! Now that you have brought the subject up, I will frankly tell you one reason why I prefer Tom to you. No, don't interrupt me. Tom is romantic. You are not. Tom admires beauty, and poetry, and—and—sentiment. And I—I value romance—true romance above all else. It means so much. At first, yes, at first, I admired you both equally. Then I saw that difference in you. I pity the girl who marries a man in whom there is not something of the poet*"—this last remark, it is safe to judge, being a fairly direct quotation from "Romance on The High Seas." Helen did not have a chance to go on much further, before a plan came to Hilder.

He interrupted rather sharply. "Please, wait a minute, Helen. I don't think that Tom Thortel cares much for romance. That is, actually cares for it, as I do."

"As *you* do?"

"Yes, I mean to say, I think he only cares for it in a superficial way."

"You are all wrong about that, Hilder, I know."

"No, I don't think so. Oh, I don't doubt he can rant pretty phrases and paint the moon for you; but, as for

me, I am, at heart, intensely romantic, and always have been, even though I don't go around shouting sonnets on everything from grasshoppers to hair nets."

"What, Hilder! You romantic? This is too much," she replied. "What one romantic thing have you done? Your proposal just now—of all the brisk, business-like, matter of fact—"

"Why, Helen," Hilder interrupted.

"Yes, that's what I thought it was." Helen's anger, now that she had expressed it, subsided a good deal. As she went on her tone was less ironically bitter. "And look at those gorgeous American Beauty Roses over there—just came an hour or so ago—a gift from Tom. Have you ever sent me flowers, Hilder?" she ended facetiously.

"No. I have not worn my love for you on my coat sleeve."

Helen replied in a voice that was suddenly changed to a serious and almost reverent tone. "No, it isn't wearing love on your coat sleeve. It is merely a part of true romance, the romance that Tom has, far more than any other man I have ever seen. Who knows, Hilder," she said, "but that if you had only been romantic, I might have preferred you to Tom?"

"Do you mean that; do you really mean that?"

The effect of this question was magnetic. Helen looked at Hilder affectionately. "Yes, I do," she replied with seriousness, "and you *are* very poor."

"Very poor? What has that to do with it?"

"Well it has, Hilder, far more than you realize."

"Well, I won't be poor always. I will make—"

"Oh, you don't understand, Hilder. It is greatly to your advantage to be poor. And in addition to that I have always liked you."

At this moment, for the second time that afternoon, the front door bell rang with three decisive staccato jerks. Helen blushed profusely.

"Who is it, Helen?" Mr. Jennisson asked.

"It must be Tom, though he never rang that way before," she added under her breath, then continued out loud, "I forgot to tell you that I am expecting him."

"Helen," Mr. Jennisson asked hurriedly, "is there not another way to get out? I don't want to see Mr. Thortel at this time. It is expecting too much of me to congratulate him right now."

"Yes, right there," she said, pointing to the door hung with the dark fawn curtain. "It's not locked. It opens on the side sun porch from which you can jump to the ground. Be careful, don't knock over the roses."

"Fine. Good-bye. Good-bye," Hilder said as he rushed through the indicated door in a manner that showed he was entirely intent on making his get-away. It was indeed a miracle that he missed "Mr. Thortel's" roses.

Half a minute later, Mr. Thortel was affectionately embracing Helen. After kissing her several times, however, he suddenly left her to transfer his attention to the roses, and commenced to count them carefully.

"Tom! What under the sun are you doing?"

"Why, I am counting the roses, my dear, to see if the florist sent the full number."

"Counting the roses?"

"Yes, certainly. I am sorry if you do not approve, but I have been thinking on the way over here this afternoon that now that we are engaged it is high time we became practical—at least that I became practical."

"Practical? Practical? What do you mean, Tom?" she asked with the inward trembling, often unnoticed by others, that attacks people so frequently when they are afraid of hearing something that they do not want to know.

"Why, simply this." Then he went on to explain that, realizing she was a very romantic girl, he had set out to court her in a manner that would appeal to her. In accordance with this plan he had spoken at great length about the beauties of nature, he had sent her romantic books, read poetry to her, and had even tried to write sonnets of his own. A large share of this extreme romance, he would now have to admit, was a pretence, that is as far as he was concerned. He was sorry about this. His excuse was that he loved her so much that he had thought it fair to adopt any means to win her. "All is fair in love and war, you know." Then he went on to say that now that they were engaged, and now that he was sure she loved him for himself, he thought it was time that he gave up this acting. During this oration, Tom had come over to the lounge, where Helen, in a trance of disappointment, had permitted him to take her hand. Now,

however, she snatched her hand away, got up, stamped her foot, and started to walk rapidly away from him. (Venus and The Dying Gaul were once more in grave danger.)

"Why, Helen," Tom said nervously, "what is the matter? Surely you could not have misunderstood. This does not mean that I love you any the less—quite the contrary."

"That may be," Helen snapped back at him sulkily.

"Well, then, dear, don't you understand that my feeling for you has not changed?"

"That may be," Helen repeated.

"Well, then what is the matter?"

"You may love me the same. I don't know about that, but that does not mean that I love *you* the same," she went on rapidly, holding her hand up to keep Tom from interrupting her. "For the first time I see that you lack all that I had thought you had. I see that—"

"Wait a minute, Helen, dear," Tom succeeded in interrupting at last, "you are carried away."

"No, I am not."

"Yes, you are."

"I'm not," she replied, stamping her foot. "Why have you shattered my illusions about you, about the wonderful romance I have always associated with you?" Her eyes lifted to the ceiling. "Songs and beauty, poetry, starlit nights, and the expanse of Arabian Deserts"—she gasped for breath. "Why have you—"

"I did not think it was necessary. I thought you loved me by now for myself. I—I—"

Helen interrupted him abruptly. "You have deceived me terribly, that is what it amounts to. Hilder was right."

"Hilder was right? Hilder was right? Hilder Jen-
nison?" She nodded her head. "Hilder was right?
What do you mean by that?"

"Yes, he said that," Helen answered more to herself
than to Tom.

"Said what! Helen?"

She answered, "He said that your romanticism was
the type one wears on one's coat sleeve. Now I see that
he told me the truth, and that probably *he* is far more
capable of fine feeling than I thought he was. Yes,
just as he told me—I see it now—he is more romantic
at heart than you are."

No sooner had Helen finished saying "than you
are," when who should break in, nearly throwing the
side door off its hinges in his haste and eagerness, other
than Hilder himself. This time, of course, he did knock
over the roses, which, however, did not slow him up in
the least. Scarcely had Venus and The Dying Gaul
(or The Roman Forum, for that matter) seen any-
thing more dramatic in their eventful lives. As for
the Basket of Fruit, this was entirely too much for its
placid existence, it fell to the floor—but then we were
not going to say anything more about the Basket of
Fruit.

Hilder, whose face was streaked with horizontal red
marks from having pressed his ear to the keyhole for a
long while, immediately rushed up to Helen in the way

that he knew a romantic cavalier would do. He addressed himself excitedly to her.

"Helen, I heard what you have just finished saying," he began. "First I must admit that I was eavesdropping. You will forgive me for this since it was the means of my finding out the truth." Hilder continued rapidly, not taking his eyes off Helen. "If I had not stayed there, I should not have heard you say that—what you did. When I heard you say that, I could not restrain myself from running in here to claim you. Besides, if I had crept unnoticed away with the intention of seeing you quietly alone later, there would have been *much less romance in it*. The romantic thing to do was to rush in here and claim you, and that's what I have done."

Meanwhile, Tom, believing it was impossible for Helen to resist such dramatic romanticism, had moved several paces away, and stood staring blankly at her. Helen was smiling. The situation was pleasing.

"Yes, Hilder, dear, I see that you are really romantic and—"

Hilder, doubly reassured by her words, and anxious to bring his romantic bravado to a definitely successful and dramatic conclusion, had stepped even closer. "But just a minute," Helen continued, as she moved slightly away from him, restrainingly, "I have got to have time to think. This is not easy—"

Mr. Jennisson interrupted, "Surely there can be no doubt in your mind now."

"If I could only be engaged to both of you at once.

Or better still," she went on rapidly, "we might arrange a trial engagement. First I shall be engaged to Tom for two months, and then to you, Hilder."

"But this is serious," Mr. Thortel broke his silence. "You can't treat it that way."

"I was never more serious," Helen answered. "Never in all my life. If you can't agree to that I must have more time to think it over."

Then a very strange thing happened. Mr. Jennisson and Mr. Thortel spoke in unison for the first time. "You must decide now," they said in one breath.

"If you don't know now which one you care for the most," Mr. Thortel went on, "I don't believe you ever will."

And Mr. Jennisson, still anxious to take advantage of his romantic charge: "Yes, you must decide now."

"Well, then," Helen answered, her face brightening with an idea, "the Fates shall decide for me. We will flip a coin."

Mr. Thortel and Mr. Jennisson both naturally objected. She insisted, however, that the "God's of Chance" should decide—that they should "rule her destiny"—insisted so determinedly that they finally let her have her way. "What could be more beautiful than starting a romance on the 'wings of luck'?" she thought to herself.

"Hand me a penny, please, Tom," she asked.

"I haven't got one."

"I have," said Hilder, and promptly handed it to her.

“If it comes heads, it’s Tom that I accept; and tails, you, Hilder.”

She flipped the coin, all three leaned over. It hit the floor, rolled against the Basket of Fruit—of which no more was to be said—and remained on edge.

And so the “Basket of Fruit,” or the “Wings of Luck” if you can look on a basket of fruit that way, decided.

A WISE THING IN THE GIRL

It was a beautiful afternoon in early May; such a May afternoon as only Madison experiences.

I left the Alpha Phi house with heavy steps. Dorothy, the girl with whom I was in love, had just told me that she was engaged. Furthermore, she had inconsiderately expected me to share her elation. Evidently, she only thought of me in the light of a friend, a convenient person in whom to confide without fear of any relationship developing that would make such confidences embarrassing. As for me, I never had realized before how completely I was in love with her.

Everything was apparently over between us. For instance, I had been looking forward for a month to driving to Chicago after graduating with Dorothy, Edith, and Jack, in the latter's car. Now that, of course, was all off, with everything else. I certainly could not expect an engaged girl to go with me. In fact, I did not think that I should want to take her, even if she were willing to go.

All of the above morose thoughts passed through my head as I left the Alpha Phi house. I went out the front door boldly, although I would have much preferred furtively sneaking away through the kitchen.

Once outside the door, though, I completely lost my

assurance, and being very anxious to get away from the scene of my disappointment, whose marks I felt could easily be read by everybody on my face, I dashed madly for my Ford, which always complacently waited for me alongside the curb, although its conspicuously despicable and rundown appearance—of which I was proud—did not warrant its *sang froid*. In the blind jump across the porch I collided squarely with someone coming up the steps.

“Wait a minute,” he said.

“Beg your pardon,” I growled, and started on.

He laid a detaining hand on my arm. “Wait! Aren’t you Joe Stevens?”

I admitted my identity and looked up at my detainer for the first time. It was Al Groves. We had gone to the same high school in Chicago. From the affable, beaming expression on his face I realized I was in for a lot of small talk about the “good old days” (the last thing I was in the mood for at present), unless I could accomplish a polite breakaway, which I solemnly determined to do.

“I’m up here over the week-end,” Jack started out. “Just going in to the Alpha Phi House now to call on a girl I used to know in Chicago. In an awful hurry, weren’t you?”

“Well, to tell the truth, I was.”

“Seems good to see you again, old man. How do you like Wisconsin?”

“Fine. Where you going?”

“Northwestern.”

"Oh," I replied, unintelligently, my thoughts centered on Dorothy.

"Good looking girl you were talking to in the vestibule—who is she?" he asked with marked enthusiasm.

"Dorothy Cutton," I answered as if thinking out loud. "Yes, pretty, but inaccessible."

"I see," he said, as he smiled knowingly.

I hastened to explain that what he had just implied was not what I meant. It seemed almost sacrilegious to me that Dorothy's name should be brought into the conversation. I at once feigned a great interest in affairs at Northwestern. After finally breaking away from Harry, I drove slowly toward home. I was frightened by the realization that I was rapidly losing control of myself, and felt that my only hope was to force my attention on something and hold it there, just as an actress does, who goes through a comedy after receiving sorrowful personal news.

A couple of blocks from our house I subconsciously noticed an attractive, rather well dressed girl, waiting for a street car. Before I realized what I was doing, I asked her if she did not think that she could save time by allowing me to take her to her destination. She was inclined to be very loquacious. From the congenial, affable manner in which she talked to me, you would have thought I was driving a Packard. For instance, she volunteered her name before we had ridden a block. It was soon apparent to me that I could not hold my attention away from that which I dreaded to think about by listening to someone else talk. My only sal-

vation was to talk myself, and talk I certainly did. She never had a chance to say another word. As to what I said, I have not the slightest idea. My only purpose was to keep myself occupied.

I must have spoken eloquently, volubly, and foolishly. I undoubtedly told her all our family secrets and peculiarities; that my father is several years younger than my mother, and enjoys smoking clandestinely in his study an old corn-cob pipe; how our chauffeur adequately assumed the role of the primitive man by kidnapping the maid of the "family next door" after she had refused to marry him willingly. (They are now both very happy and have three husky kids.) Why, I might even have told her, for all I know, the arch secret of all—that my grandfather has false teeth. I fervently hope I did not go into too many details about them.

The attractive girl thanked me profusely for the ride, at the same time looking at me pathetically as if to say, "Poor nut, he is a little off."

As I was entering our house, Jack stopped me. It seemed Edith was outside in his car; in my preoccupation I had not noticed her.

"Will you please stay with Edith while I get some things from the house for the picnic we are going on?"

Although talking to Edith was the last thing that I wanted to do in my present state of mind, I had to answer that I would be glad to, for a refusal would have required a long explanation that it certainly would have been unwise for me to give.

"How are you, Joe?" Edith asked.

It was apparent that any attempt on my part to carry on the usual social banter with Edith was going to be pitiful. The full realization of my disappointment was just beginning to strike me with an intensity that made me numb to all other considerations.

I replied absent-mindedly, "Fine."

"We had a great time on our picnic to the Dells."

I was all absorbed in reflecting on the stupidity of not having asked Dorothy to whom she was engaged. "That so, Edith—where did you say?"

Edith answered impatiently. "The Dells. It is beautiful country."

"Oh."

Edith continued heroically with a strenuous effort to create conversation. "Look, I just got my wrist watch back from the jewelers."

"That so?"

"Yes, I think I broke it by turning the hands back. You shouldn't turn the hands of a watch back, should you?"

I was thinking of what a lovable and sweet disposition Dorothy had, how pretty she was, how she was graced with charming vivacity and frivolity, yet could be splendidly serious whenever the occasion demanded it; how cleverly and entertainingly she could talk; how becoming her clothes were to her; how damn foolish it was of her to become engaged, and how emphatically I disapproved, on general principles if nothing else, of all college engagements, anyway. Girls should wait

until they are through college at least, before they become engaged, then, perhaps, they would show more wisdom in their choice.

"Joe! Did you hear me? I asked you if you know whether it does any harm to turn the hands of a watch back or not?"

"No—you—shouldn't turn—the hands of—a watch—back—or not. That—is—I don't think so."

Edith, having failed with both picnics and watches, was not by any means discouraged. She smiled as she thought of a subject of conversation that she felt certain would arouse my interest, and it did, but naturally not in the way that she had expected. "Jack and I are looking forward with all the pleasure in the world to driving to Chicago with Dorothy and you."

I jumped, as if a pistol had been fired off under my nose. "Oh—it is kind of you to speak of it—but—Dorothy cannot go."

"What! We shall have to go alone?"

"I guess so. We can't go," I said with a bluntness that should have discouraged further questioning.

Edith was distinctly perplexed; she was anxious to be considerate, yet above all, she was evidently desirous of gaining further information. It is so difficult to combine an insatiable curiosity with thoughtfulness.

"It can't be that Dorothy and you have quarreled?"

Fortunately, Jack arrived at this moment, just in time to excuse my failure to answer and free me from what I thought I was certainly going to be subjected to, a thorough and persistent cross-examination.

"Will you go for a ride with us now?" he asked.

Edith could not entirely conceal her relief at my refusal. She evidently wanted an opportunity to be with Jack alone in order to tell him she had found out that Dorothy and I had quarreled.

"That's right, Joe, I forgot," Jack continued; "you're going to the Alpha Phi Formal with Dorothy tonight, aren't you?"

The Alpha Phi Formal! I had forgotten all about it. Well, I wouldn't go. Dorothy had said nothing about it that afternoon. She evidently desired to be with the man to whom she was engaged. That was very natural.

The dinner gong rang. I could not nerve myself to eat with everybody in the thick of the usual light and bantering conversation; I cranked up the Ford to go down to the Varsity Cafe, where I got so much pepper in my eggs, an unexplainable occurrence, because I have never used pepper, that I could not eat them. I went out of the restaurant with the unpaid check in my hand. A waiter came flying after me. I was too far gone in dazed melancholy to be embarrassed.

I walked around aimlessly for a while, mostly up and down the lake shore, I think, finally arriving home, without intending to, at about half-past nine.

"Joe Stevens, you're wanted on the phone," shrieked the voice of an irate freshman on phone duty that week."

"Hello," I called into the phone indifferently.

"Joe?"

"Yes."

"Why aren't you down here?"

"Who is it?"

"Dorothy; don't you know my voice any more?"

I decided to be very harsh. "Well, what are you 'phoning for?"

"For you, of course. Whatever is the matter? You should have been here half an hour ago. You know that."

"No, I don't."

"What! Why, you certainly remember that you have an engagement with me for the dance here at the house. All the rest of the men have been here at least half an hour."

"Your engagement to be married cancels all my obligations to you, doesn't it?"

"No. Not this one. Did you think I could get another man in the last four hours? Come right down. Don't be foolish."

"I feel it is dishonorable to go with you."

"Nonsense, dishonorable or not, I am without a partner."

"Haven't formal clothes on."

"Makes no difference. Of course, if you don't want to . . ."

"Certainly I want to. Be there right away. Good-bye."

Dorothy looked wonderfully attractive that night in a black velvet evening dress that set off with delicate contrast her high color. I thought she had no right to

look so well for me while she was engaged to somebody else, *and I told her so*. That started it. She suggested that we should walk in the Japanese garden.

You know there is something about Japanese lanterns that always made me very eloquent.

I have no idea how many dances we missed. Anyway, before we went in, I had persuaded her to break her engagement, *and for me*.

After that I strutted like a young rooster that has won his first fight, Dorothy demurely holding my arm. I had forgotten all about my lack of evening clothes, and I had most certainly changed my mind about college engagements.

"I am going to announce our engagement to everybody, right here, Dorothy," I told her.

"Why, Joe—is that the thing to do?"

"I don't care. I want to feel certain about it, and it is the only way that I can."

"All right," she whispered, and I remember as if it were yesterday the delicately caressing way in which she spoke, "only don't tell them about my being engaged before, as I kept it from them. Ours is the only one that I want them to know about, anyway."

* * * * *

One winter evening, after we had been married nearly three years (we were quietly sitting in front of the log fire in the library of our home) I received the greatest surprise of my life.

"Joe, dear, I have a serious confession to make to you."

Since I expected the announcement of more extravagant purchases, which we could not afford, I drew myself together for adequate disapproval. I was prepared to reply with a sharp statement on the absolute need of living within one's means.

"Go ahead."

"I don't know that I ought to tell you. I have kept it from you for three years."

"Three years!"

"I am afraid you will be angry."

"Will try not to be." My curiosity made me slightly modify my determination to be stern.

"Joe, I never was engaged to anyone except you."

"What!"

"No."

"You deceived me?"

"Yes, I had to."

"What's that?"

"Certainly. If I hadn't, we might never have been married. I had to do something to wake you out of your tongue-tied indifference."

"No wonder I never was able to get you to tell me the name of the man to whom you were supposedly engaged."

"Are you angry, Joe?"

"Well, I hate to lose the credit for persuading you to break an engagement. I was very proud of my eloquent oratory that night."

"So was I, Joe. Even if I had been engaged, after the way you spoke that night, I would have broken it."

"Would you really?"

"Yes, dear."

"Well, if that is the case I am quite as well satisfied."

MR. JECKEL'S WIFE

Mr. Jeckel's party at the large Merry Garden Cabaret consisted of himself and three men, friends of his, and Mr. Jeckel's partner and three girls, friends of hers—"my girl friend," as she separately spoke of each one of them.

"Eight ginger ales," thundered Mr. Jeckel. He felt like thundering; he was in his element. Was it not he that had arranged for the table next to the dance floor, and had obtained "The Four Roses?" Was it not also he that was now pouring it stealthily out from one of his silver hip-flasks?

Although there was little chance of a raid, he enjoyed pretending that he was in grave danger. It gave him the same pleasure he had obtained at a much earlier age by stealing jam out of the pantry. Mr. Jeckel did not in the least, however, let his pretense of danger damp his feeling of cheerful content, and entire satisfaction with himself and the world. He beamed on the people packed into the Merry Gardens. He beamed on the girls in the dancing Revue, he beamed on the members of his party, and he felt altogether like joyfully baying at the moon. The fact that the moon was not out did not deter him from this last desire.

"That waiter keeps looking at me as if he knew

me," shouted Mr. Jeckel with determination to be heard above the orchestral din, "and he is a damn fool, because he doesn't."

Everybody thought that was particularly funny; the girls were carried away by it. Mr. Jeckel's partner was a "sweet sugar mama"—as she gently referred to herself repeated times that evening—from the chorus of *The Passing Show*. Her full thickly rouged lips had gayly left their mark on the right shoulder front of his fastidiously chosen dinner jacket; her eye-lashes were blacked, beaded, and curled in the most approved fashion, and her dark brown hair had been recently re-hennaed until all was a beautiful auburn glow. She was wearing a dress, with one shoulder strap, that trailed the floor in bounteous fashion in a valiant attempt to outreach the style of the day. With an hysterical waving gesture in dramatic appreciation of Mr. Jeckel's remark, she upset her recently refilled glass on his carefully pressed trousers, a slight attention which, in spite of his copious and hearty feeling of "all is well," did not gain his entire sympathy. Everybody else, however, plainly showed by long sustained laughter that they did not share his disparaging opinion of the episode. They had no inclination to lose the advantage of that stimulated mood that grasps most easily the sort of humor that pulls a chair out from underneath a man who is about to sit down.

"I don't really mind the trousers," began Mr. Jeckel, with an attempt to be seriously heroic.

"Sh— Sh—ow shorry—y— I—di—didn't—show

shorr—y I meant to do it,” said Mr. Jeckel’s partner by way of apology.

It seemed that Mr. Jeckel was willing to take it for granted that she had finally said what she had intended to; at any rate, as the Patriotic Revue came out on the dancing floor just then with balloons to throw to the tables, he was immediately absorbed in trying to capture one whole. They had a most perplexing and inexplicable habit of smashing as he aggressively grabbed them with both hands. At last he got one by the string, and holding on to the very end of it with his arm stretched up, marched triumphantly round the table with high lifted knees, to the tune of Yankee Doodle. That the string slipped out of Mr. Jeckel’s fingers, allowing the balloon to sail away from him toward the ceiling, when he was half-way around, did not disturb the completion of his triumphal march.

It was a gala night at the Merry Garden; “Dancing to Three Orchestras and Entertainment De Luxe.” Yes, it was indeed a gala night. Altho it was commencing to rain and thunder outside, all was jubilant within. The ceiling was covered with balloons and the people were covered with bright colored feathers, the same as those in the pictures of the head dresses of “Chief-Afraid-of-His-Horse” and other frequently mentioned Indian braves. These feathers, which had artificial burrs at the end of their quills to make them stick to clothing, had been given out earlier in the evening, and the jazz orchestra had played “Ain’t We Got Fun,” while everybody threw them around to stick on

their neighbors. Mr. Jeckel's party was covered with them. One of the men, in fact, looked as if he had been subject to a good old New England tar and feathering.

The thundering outside was becoming louder and more frequent.

A little later in the evening the man who gave the appearance of being tarred and feathered leaned towards Mr. Jeckel and confidentially stuttered in his ear, "I'm a var-i-e-gated mouse." This was entirely too obscure for even Mr. Jeckel. He turned his attention again to the patriotic dancers. Moreover, he was beginning to sober somewhat. The tarred and feathered gentleman, unable to get understanding sympathy from Mr. Jeckel, contented himself with ingeniously interpreting as a personal tribute the clapping of the crowd for an encore from the "Patriotic Girls." He stood up and bowed profusely and gravely to the entire assemblage in acknowledgment, but humbly assured them with a voice that most adequately carried to the farthest corners of the Merry Garden that as he was "only a variegated mouse" he did not in truth deserve their applause. The crowd, laughing, agreed with Mr. Jeckel that it was not to be debated.

There was an extraordinarily loud thunder crash outside.

Mr. Jeckel's wife, whom he had left at home alone as usual, was afraid of thunder. It made him think of her. Although he had left her staying at home alone at night a lot recently, as he was doing tonight, and although she had complained that she believed, since

he left her so much, that he must be unfaithful to her, and had cried about it; he knew that she would return good for evil. He knew that, no matter what was his own laxity, she would be implicitly faithful to him; he knew that she would not take advantage of his absence by having affairs with other men. And so, although the thundering continued, it ceased to have any effect on Mr. Jeckel. His momentary thoughts of his wife were gone.

He had again become entirely concerned with the pleasures of the moment and the future moments after they left the Merry Garden with the girls.

* * * * *

Many hours later, driving home up Sheridan Road in the rain completed the sobering of Mr. Jeckel. He plucked the last of the feathers off himself before quietly turning the key in his front door. He was extremely careful not to wake his wife; it was very late. After quietly taking off his shoes, he tiptoed towards the stairs. Two people jumped up from the living-room lounge. His wife cautioned the man: "Be careful not to catch cold, going out in the rain," and threw his muffler over his shoulders. The man ran for the back entry of the house; Mr. Jeckel started after him, firing both of his shoes at him as he ran. One of them reached its mark, hitting the right shoulder blade of the speedily retreating victim, which served to make him even more speedily retreating, if that were possible;

but the other went smashing into a large Dresden vase, which seemed only too glad to break away from the monotony of its long sustained position by crashing to the floor in many pieces. Mrs. Jeckel screamed. The vase was very valuable. The man ran out thru the kitchen door, which—it was evident—he had thoughtfully left open to facilitate his escape in case of emergency. By the time Mr. Jeckel reached the kitchen porch the intruder was already running down the alley. Mr. Jeckel, who had been unable even to see the face of the stranger, strode back to his wife. He punched on the living-room light.

His wife was standing in the corner, much embarrassed, her face covered with her hands, and her hair disarranged.

“Have you got anything to say for yourself?” thundered Mr. Jeckel for the second time in the evening, only now it had nothing to do with ginger ales. “This is a pretty howdy-do, indeed.”

His wife couldn’t answer; she started to cry.

“Stop crying, *stop crying, I say*,” shouted Mr. Jeckel, as he roughly grabbed his wife’s arm. “Who was that man?”

“He was an old friend of mine, you don’t know him, a Mr. Fenkin. He merely came to call on us. Just because you weren’t home I couldn’t ask him to go, could I?”

“I don’t believe you. Why should he have stayed here until half past three in the morning?”

“I g—I-I guess we didn’t notice what time it was.”

"No, from as much as I saw when I came in, I guess you were oblivious of the time," replied Mr. Jeckel with angry sarcasm.

Mrs. Jeckel smiled.

"Well, he—he—the truth is—he stayed then because I was afraid of the thunder."

Mr. Jeckel burst out again, as before, unbelieving and infuriated. "Oh, so that is it, you certainly wanted to get mighty close to him for protection, didn't you? Of course, I may exaggerate, but it seems to me that your hair is considerably mussed. Although it is still raining," he continued sarcastically, "the thunder, by the way, stopped three hours ago, and even if he did stay for that reason, what did he go running out for like a guilty criminal?"

"I don't know, really—Oh—probably he thought that you would not believe what he said if he did stay."

This was certainly very lame. Mr. Jeckel's ostrich-like confidence in his wife was shattered.

From that time on the extent of his dissipation at night was to smoke a cigar at home with his feet on the radiator.

* * * * *

The stranger never came back—that is, to Mr. Jeckel's knowledge! He did come, frequently. He had always been in the habit of coming to see his sister and his brother-in-law, and he showed no inclination to give up that habit.

Both Mrs. Jeckel and her brother nearly fell asleep waiting so long for Mr. Jeckel's arrival that night, which, if it had not occurred, would undoubtedly have spoiled somewhat the abrupt and thorough effectiveness of their scheme.

A COLLEGE HAIR-CUT

I

Tall, lanky Dave Horton—the willowy lady of the College Footlights Club—was in the barber's chair. It was one o'clock in the morning.

Horton's head fell back on the rest. "Give me a college hair-cut," he stuttered. "Got to look pretty, you know. Going to see my girl. We play her town, Manitobosa, tomorrow. You know, I like to play these towns along the Canadian Border." More than one of those present nodded their assent. "She has turned me down twenty times," he laughed. So did the crowd, the troupe of the Footlights Club, that had assembled back of the chair in which he was reclining. Wandering down the street, exultant over their presentation of the Zion City Maniacs in the high school auditorium, they had taken the town barber shop by storm. It had appealed to them as a quaint spot for a gathering. "Marie is wonderful, perf-ly wond-ful. She is beautiful, pos-tly beautiful. No, I mustn't talk about women. I said to myself, I mustn't talk about women. I made a vow to myself, I mustn't talk about women."

"Yes," a voice in the background. "That's a good rule, for when you do, you tell too much about yourself. Tha's right."

"No—mustn't talk 'bout women. Turned me down twenty times. Her eyes are—I—l-l-lov—lov . . . " His eyes closed. A few minutes later he half opened them to repeat drowsily, "Give me—a—col-lege—hair-cut." Then sinking further over the head rest, he fell into a heavy sleep, the intensity of which can only be understood by those who have been inebriated to the extent of that most "charming lady" of the Footlights Chorus.

Shortie Griffith, as broad as he was tall, also a lady in the Footlights Chorus (at the other end of the line), goodnatured and always anxious to be obliging, hastened toward the somnambulist with scissors and comb. Soon he grew tired of cutting hair with scissors, a slow and tedious process at best; for one who has not followed the barbers' trade as a vocation, an absolute bore; and discarded them in favor of exclusive use of clippers. Ignorant of the combination for lowering the chair, he was forced to remain on tiptoe, an incentive for exhilaration.

Now it is a peculiar characteristic of clippers that they are as thorough and rapid (perhaps more so) in the hand of an amateur as they are under the guidance of the best trained professionals. Thus it was not long until Dave, all unconscious of his state, had a scalp that would have shaken the confidence of widely advertised hair tonics and have caused competent Indian chiefs to shriek with envy.

Shortie, viewing his work, became enthusiastic about barber duty, and proceeded to shave the gentleman

under his care. His hand was none too steady. Forty odd males of the Footlights Club joined him in his search for court-plaster.

The face patched, all viewed the bald expanse of Horton's head, and applauded. Shortie, an actor, bowed: then wound his way modestly through his compatriots to the back of the audience they formed.

Several crap games were started, the dice which were in the drawer of the bootblack's chair augmenting the number that it was possible to carry on. Several hours later the troupe, carrying their casualties (Horton was not alone in his somnia), drifted back to their quarters in the Pullman which was conveying them in their tour of the state.

"Wake up you loafers, it's three o'clock in the afternoon," shouted someone, feeling responsible, walking up and down the aisle. Few responded. Hibernation is not to be treated lightly. Horton, however, stirred. He rolled over, raised himself on one arm, lifted the shade four or five inches, discovered that they were passing through a town and that it was daylight. Tried to make out the name of the town on the side of the station, couldn't, pulled down the curtain, damned whoever it was who was shouting, and stretched out to go back to sleep. Then, suddenly remembering that he had forgotten something, he sat up abruptly, assumed a judicial post, and shook his head several times. Reassured that he had no headache, he carried the self tests further by swallowing rapidly. The roof of his mouth had tasted worse. He was well satisfied.

A majority of society being in one state, it is seldom that they will allow the rest to remain in another. The aisle shouter had enlisted the support of all those up and dressed in dispelling the dissenters from their berths. One by one they were heaved to the floor. "It's scarcely dark yet," came the protest from the berth next to Horton's.

"Scarcely dark yet—you mean it is almost dark again." With that and the thump of a fallen ruler, Horton's neighbor hit the floor. There was a howl of pleasure.

Horton, forewarned, grabbing his comb and crush, scrambled out of his berth. He tore past the troupe in the aisle. They looked at him solemnly. No one smiled.

He raised his chin to part his hair in the exact center. "My God!" Climbing to his toes, he shook his head, then ran his fingers over its shiny surface. At first, thinking his hair had fallen out as punishment for his transgressions of the previous night, he was reverently silent; then, becoming suspicious, he shrieked like a trapped eagle. The troupe, the front rank of which, crowded by the others, had been peeking around the curtains, rushed in. They offered many words of advice and sympathy; but disclaimed all knowledge of the occurrence. They were flattered to hear that he could believe any member of their number capable of such skill. Poor Horton, he didn't even remember that he had been in a barber shop. "Where did I go after the performance was over?" No one seemed to know.

There was not a single clue with which to trace the culprit. "But Marie; I am to see her after the performance tonight. How can I ever explain?" Many alibis were suggested. None were meant to sound convincing. There was one consolation; the court-plasters ripped off, the cuts on his cheek proved to be of such a minor character as to be unnoticeable. In fact, most of them covered totally imaginary marks.

The performance went better than ever that night. The willowy lady—the wig a better fit with hair close shaven—repeatedly brought down the house. The demure Marie, in a box to the right, her little toes moving in rhythm with the syncopation, smiled proudly. She threw kisses to him.

Off the stage between scenes Horton's knees shook. It was all very well, this applause, kisses from Marie—but afterward.

Shortie guilelessly suggested a black skull cap of the rotund variety, such as those worn by aged shopkeepers in small country towns.

The coach finally came to the rescue. Out of his collection was discovered a wig that did rather well. It was nearly the same shade as Horton's hair, now lying across a bewildered barber's floor.

There was quite a time in sticking the wig to Horton's scalp. This type of make-up had to be staunch, capable of more resistance to stress and strain than that for the stage. Horton surveyed himself in the glass critically. It wouldn't do. There was no denying that it was artificial. Disappointed, he started to

tear it off. The coach shrieked his objection. "What are you going to do? Appear totally bald before your lady love?"

"She's not that."

"Well, you think well of her, don't you? How long do you think she is going to believe in you after she sees you without a hair on your head? Be sensible. That wig's not so bad. In my opinion, it's a pretty good fake, and you know I haven't been in this game for twenty years for nothing. Take my word for it, it will do splendidly. Keep your hat on and keep sorta in the shadows, and no one will notice the difference."

"How can I keep my hat on? We were going to a dance."

"Be firm, insist on walking." The coach, a burley individual of limited vocabulary, was warming to the part of convincing orator. "You don't like to be inside after being inside on the stage for so long. For the sake of your art and your voice you need fresh air, you know. Be gentle, but firm. Ah! you want to walk with her alone; so that you can tell her many things that you have long wished to speak about."

II

"Won't you come inside? Miss Sheldon will be right down. She's expecting you."

"No, thanks, I need fresh air; my voice, you know." The maid didn't know; however, it was not within her position to insist.

Marie tripped down the stairs. "Why, where is Mr. Horton?"

"Out on the porch, Miss Marie, he wouldn't come in."

"Oh."

"Hello," she said.

Horton, usually very gallant, tipped his hat with an abrupt staccato movement, barely lifting it from his head. "Waiting out here," he said, "just because the evening is so wonderful I did not want to miss any of it."

"I began to think you weren't coming. You said you would be right over after the close of the show."

"Yes, I know. I'm very sorry, really. But I had something to do around there after the close of the performance—sorta of a professional nature—that unavoidably detained me. I'm very sorry."

"Oh, it's all right. Only mother was threatening not to let me go out on account of the show lasting so long in the first place, and then your being late on top of that. But I didn't pay any attention; I knew she would have to. She always does." Horton nodded. They had started down the steps.

"You were wonderful in the play tonight, Dave; I'm so glad to see you." He bolstered his courage.

"Marie, I wonder if you would care a great deal if we should not go to the dance tonight?" She did not reply. "You see, I have got a little cold and the doctor said fresh air is good for me, especially if I am to keep my voice. And you know I have got to do that. We have a performance every night for two weeks now.

Being in while the performance is on is hard enough on my voice. I need to be outside as much of the rest of the time as possible. Besides, by walking we can be alone. I've wanted to talk with you alone."

She smiled up at him. "But my slippers, I better go back to the house to change them."

"No you won't have to do that. It is not at all muddy. If we should come to any wet spot, I will carry you over it."

She put her fingers on his arm and lifted her face again. "You were wonderful tonight. I was so enthralled."

"Yes, I saw that. I mean I . . ."

"Oh, you did see me then—"

"Yes, of course. I bowed in front of your box, didn't I?"

"Yes."

They walked by the lake shore.

* * * * *

"Won't you come in for a few minutes? I know it is awfully late, but if we're quiet we won't wake anybody."

"You know how much I would like to, but my throat, Marie."

"Your throat! A few minutes won't hurt your throat. But listen to me—I'm not the one that is supposed to be in the position of urging." She turned on her heel haughtily.

"Wait a minute, Marie, of course I want to come in, but promise me," he continued in an emotional whisper, "that you won't turn on any lights."

"Oh, you wicked boy!"

But he wasn't, particularly. He was still thinking of what the coach had said about "sorta keeping in the shadows."

Within, settled on the living room lounge, his wig withstanding well the stress and strain, the subtle fragrance of a French perfume in the air, he breathed contentedly. There were moments, nevertheless, with the glimmer of the hall light falling into the room, when he felt that Marie was looking at him rather questioningly. By the next time he saw her, however, his own locks restored, her doubts, if she had had any, were dismissed.

FALSE TEETH

"Yes, Miss Fenstone," affably spoke Mrs. Dempling, a partly round lady, uncomfortably buckled into a new dress, "I made the biscuits myself from a recipe my mother always used." Peter Dempling frowned at his mother and attempted to step on her foot under the table. "Why are you kicking me, Peter?"

"Pardon, mother, I didn't mean to." Confused, he blushed to the hue of an Indian in full war paint. "I was just stretching, I guess." Peter's suit (in imitation of the college style; a loose four button coat and full trousers which broke over his shoes) was pressed—an unusual condition; his hose were his best woolen pair, with yellow clocking; and his hair, soaked to the roots, was meticulously combed and plastered.

"Well, Peter, I have told you many times not to stretch at the table. I won't say anything more about it now that we have company."

Peter glared.

Mr. Tinsel, Peter Dempling's grandfather, thought it time that he took part in the conversation. "Yes," he said, a broad smile revealing a perfect set of teeth, "you're right, Jane, your mother used the same recipe before you, only I think her biscuits were a trifle better than yours. All our family were good cooks." Peter frowned again. He wished he could reach far enough

to step on his grandfather's foot. "I suppose you do a lot of cooking yourself, Miss Fenstone?" Grandfather Tinsel went on. "Every girl should."

"No—no, I don't, Mr. Tinsel," Miss Fenstone said politely. "I suppose I ought to learn." Miss Fenstone's light brown hair reaching nearly to her shoulders in a very long bob, was attractively set off by blue eyes. Eyes which changed to a darker hue in certain lights and sparkled with the fascination of life at seventeen.

"You don't? Really I don't know what young girls are coming to." He shook his head despairingly, which added slightly to the gray hairs and dandruff on his shoulders. "Why, when I was a lad, every—"

Peter, in agony, broke sharply in on his grandfather, "Won't you have another helping of something, anything, Myrtle? Father, perhaps Myrtle would like another helping of meat," he continued rapidly.

"Yes, yes, Miss Fenstone, let me help you to some more."

"No, thank you, Mr. Dempling, I have had plenty."

"Ah, Reverend Hepburn, may I help you to some more?" The Reverend Mr. Hepburn passed his plate with alacrity. He had the usual appetite of ministers invited to Sunday dinner.

"But you will have some jam, won't you, Myrtle?" On this first Sunday that Miss Fenstone was at the Dempling home, in fact the first time that she had come into their home at all, Peter did not wish attention shown to any other guest, whoever he might be.

He had objected strenuously to the minister being invited under any circumstances, but his mother had been staunch in her insistence, saying that, as it was seven weeks since the last time he had been to their home, she must have him.

Peter's father commenced to talk to the Reverend Mr. Hepburn about his morning sermon. This was fortunate for Peter; Grandfather Tinsel's stout interest in religion proved sufficient to halt his discourse on the old fashioned girl. Although Peter had spent the entire sermon in day dreams of Miss Fenstone, combined with anxiety that everything would go well at dinner, he took part in the conversation enthusiastically, seeking to draw everyone into it in hope that this would prevent any such further degrading revelations as that of his mother doing part of her own housework. For a while, except that his father held his knife in the air and talked with food in his mouth, everything went to his satisfaction. Peter anxiously turned around to see whether his mother had followed his instructions to hang the best curtains. Oh, horror of horrors—that was the climax—one was up and one wasn't. Probably Myrtle was shocked and disillusioned beyond repair. Wondering if she had turned completely against him, he timidly felt for her hand under the table. Evidently she hadn't, at least not entirely, for she permitted him to retain it a few minutes. If only his father would stop chewing with his mouth open, his grandfather enter into no more long dissertations on the past, and his mother cease referring to

doing part of her own cooking and refrain from telling stories of his childhood, perhaps Myrtle would not think too harshly of all that had gone before.

"Miss Fenstone, didn't you think Peter did well in 'Twelfth Night'?"

"Please, mother—"

"Seeing you young people in Shakespeare at the high school last night was a real treat to Mr. Dempling and myself. Wasn't it, John?" Mrs. Dempling waited impressively for her answer.

"Huh? Yes, of course it was; of course it was."

"We haven't been to the theatre much recently. We used to go quite frequently about ten years ago. Sometimes we used to take Peter with us. He was just a little boy then. Remember how sleepy he used to get, John?"

"Uh-huh."

"He was so dear at that age. I've always loved the theatre. Remember the time, John, when we saw Miss—Miss—her name has slipped my mind right now, as Rosalind in the 'Merchant of Venice?' It was only a stock company, I believe, but Miss—"

"Mother, mother, Rosalind is not in the 'Merchant of Venice'; Portia is."

"So she is, so she is, but isn't Rosalind, too?"

"No."

"Well, it doesn't make any difference." Peter thought it did. He was sensitive for his mother.

Mr. Dempling meekly remained out of the discussion. The drama was not in his line, nor his line of interest

either, for that matter. Even with his son in the cast, he hadn't particularly enjoyed the high school auditorium as it echoed as best it could with "Twelfth Night." (Mrs. Dempling had been effective in keeping him awake.) Being predominantly a silent man, he did enjoy a good movie occasionally, preferably those with western scenes.

On Peter's left, his younger brother spilled jam on the tablecloth. Peter shoved his butter plate over it. On the whole, things were now going better. Grandfather Tinsel, having recovered his teeth that morning, after two days of painstaking search, in his determination to make amends for the liquid diet on which he had been forced to subsist during the previous forty-eight hours, was not talking as much as usual. The cook, who also acted as waitress, came in with more gravy. She had been very indignant all day; her teeth were gone. Although she was annoyed to the point of telling the entire table of their unaccountable disappearance, undecorated gums not being adapted to emphatic enunciation, she was forced to remain silent. Grandfather Tinsel, picking up his ear of corn (a pleasure to which he had long looked forward) began to munch off the kernels. The result, as can be imagined, was disastrous. The teeth, belonging to the cook, did not fit securely and were at once dislodged, falling to the table with a long reverberating clatter. Recognizing her own, the cook squawked as if she were a hen recovering a lost chick, grabbed her teeth, and tore madly for the kitchen, spilling the gravy over the

frock-coated, circumspect Reverend Mr. Hepburn in her haste—a slight attention which even that Reverend gentleman did not exactly appreciate. After several moments' pause, however, he did his best to ease the situation. He said that ordinarily ministers' frocks were too formal, and were, therefore, much in need of a touch of color, such as now had—"ahem"—been supplied. Except for Miss Fenstone, no one smiled.

Peter sat paralyzed—as near to collapse as is possible for one to be who still has consciousness—a sad defeated expression reaching from ear to ear. Myrtle, refined and elegant, would never look at him again. Grandfather Tinsel was frozen—mouth open, corn cob still in hand, as if he expected the teeth to fly back in place.

They did come back—but with the cook. She rushed in railing, stamping. "I am leaving at once. I've been insulted, compromised. Compromised, I tell you. There is no question about it." Pivoting sharply, with an effect that would have done credit to an all-American halfback, she left for good.

There was a minute or two of silence. "Well, my dear," Mr. Dempling said, "you better wait on the table, otherwise we will get no salad nor dessert."

Grandfather Tinsel was recovering himself. He had closed his mouth.

"Now, Peter, dear, you help me clear away the dishes," spoke Mrs. Dempling, busying herself with getting her dinner back to running order. Such ignominy for Peter! Although Myrtle thoughtfully

asked if she could help, Peter appreciated that no longer could he expect her to have anything to do with him.

Later, in the living room, waiting for his mother to bring the coffee, he remained in the same hopeless silence that had overtaken him with the fall of the teeth and the cook's departure, those capping climaxes to a day of disappointment, chagrin, and total loss. His short legs were stretched out despairingly to their full length, his head was buried in his overgrown hands, he had even forgotten to pull up his trousers to prevent them from becoming baggy at the knees.

Myrtle leaned toward him. "What's the matter, Peter, dear?" she whispered. "You aren't saying anything. You mustn't worry. I have been amused by all that has happened. I have never had such a good time in all my life, and I thought it would be such a strict formal dinner. I dreaded it. And I like your mother and father and grandfather so much. Only your grandfather made me feel so ashamed."

"Yes, his abominable false teeth. If only—"

"No, not that. I think false teeth are perfectly fascinating," she said, seriously. "I never confided in you before, did I, that my daddy has them? I was afraid that you would not like it. And he wears a wig, too, Peter."

Peter was beginning to see the light of day. "That's strange. So does my father. You would never know it to look at him, though—now would you?" They both surveyed Mr. Dempling intently.

"No, Peter, but wigs are perfectly fascinating, too, don't you think?" Peter did not venture anything on that. "But as I said, I did feel queer when I had to admit to your grandfather that I can't cook much. Peter, dear, I am going to ask your mother for her biscuit recipe, if I may. Aren't you proud of your mother's biscuits?"

Peter had definitely caught the trend of things now. "I certainly am," he replied. "As a matter of fact, that is why I mentioned them during dinner. You probably have noticed, however," he added in explanation, "that I have not talked a great deal about mother's cooking. I was afraid that you might think I was inclined to brag too much about my parents."

* * * * *

Three days later, Peter confided to Myrtle that his grandfather's night and day search for the "Holy Grail," as he termed it, had ended that morning: he had finally located his teeth—in the carpet sweeper. Myrtle laughed, so did Peter. Laughing, arm in arm, they went down the street together.

A BELL AND A BATTERY

Professor Ezanuel, so tall that he always appeared to be standing on stilts, was ringing the door bell—of the wrong house. In his absent-mindedness he had climbed the wrong steps, his long arms swinging by his side, his thin face pointed to the sky, and in his further absent-mindedness, or preoccupation of mind, whichever you wish to call it, he had forgotten to take his finger from the bell. While he is standing there, continuing to lean his whole weight against the bell, and ringing himself, at an age supposed to be beyond upsetting, into trouble, excitement, and romance, the like of which had been even outside the scope of his dreams—for they, as well as he, were unassuming—we will have plenty of time to see just how absent-minded Professor Ezanuel was.

* * * * *

He lectured on history at one of America's foremost universities, and in all justice to him it must be said that he lectured very well. There was, however, a certain peculiarity about his gestures. Frequently, for instance, to emphasize a point, having shot one of his long arms out at right angles or in some other direction, he forgot to withdraw it, and left it there for the

next four or five minutes of his talk. Thus, at times, he was surprised to find his arm high above his head instead of at his side when he wanted to make use of it to emphasize the next point; surprised in a mild way, yet not provoked, for it was really no inconvenience. A new gesture could be started from above his head with nearly as much ease as from his side, whereas, if the gesture was also to be of the overhead variety, there was the great advantage both in speed and conservation of energy of having his arm already there.

The most convincing example of Professor Ezanuel's absent-mindedness, however, is an incident that took place at the last Faculty Ball.

He was bowing to Miss Smith of the French Department.

"May I please have this dance?"

"Yes, with the greatest of pleasure."

There was a pause of several moments during which Miss Smith made no move to dance.

"Miss Smith, may I please have this dance?"

"Yes, Professor Ezanuel." Again, however, Miss Smith gave no indication of being ready to commence.

"Miss Smith, did you not say that I could have this dance?"

Miss Smith was growing rather impatient. "Yes, I have told you so three times."

"Well, why don't we dance then?"

"Why—why, Professor Ezanuel, surely you know that the music has not started yet."

Fortunately, up to the day when Professor Ezanuel

was ringing the wrong door bell, and, like his gestures, forgot to stop ringing it, his absentmindedness had been of no serious consequence in the course of his life.

* * * * *

Mr. Jentel, whose door bell was being rung, angrily jerked open the door. Being a quick-tempered man, he was infuriated by the long ringing; by the boorishness of anyone, whoever he might be, who, instead of giving a bell two or three well-bred and discreet pokes, kept on leaning against it, *ad infinitum*. Besides, he had just had a new battery put in that morning, and naturally was irritated by the present probability of having it completely worn out on the same day that it had been installed.

“What are you trying to do, wear out the battery?” he thundered, while, with an abrupt shove he pushed Professor Ezanuel away from the offending bell.

Professor Ezanuel, however, did not consent to being treated in this offhand manner. Generally he was rather mild, but being exceedingly ruffled by the shove he had just received, which had been none too gentle, he felt that definite retaliation was necessary, and, furthermore, believing himself to be impudently attacked on his own front porch by a stranger who had come out of a house in which he had no right to be, he determined to make this retaliation adequate to the best of his ability. The best of his ability was almost too much for the continuance on this sphere of Mr. Jentel.

Professor Ezanuel's right, strengthened as it necessarily had been by many long sustained history gestures, hit him a terrible blow. Mr. Jentel went down in a lump, and his round head knocked against the stone doorstep of the porch, which did not serve to ease his condition. In fact he continued to lie inert long after a referee could have counted the conventional ten. And all this on account of an innocent push of a door bell.

When he finally came to himself in a hospital many days later, upon being advised of what had happened, the first thing he determined was to send for his lawyer to prefer a charge against poor Professor Ezanuel of attack with intent to murder.

Regularly every day since his unfortunate blow, Professor Ezanuel, much worried, alarmed, and conscience-stricken, had called on Mr. Jentel's daughter, a stalwart young lady of twenty-six or thereabouts, to express his sorrow for what he had done, and to inquire how her father was getting on. That is to say, at first he called solely because of his concern and interest in the welfare of Mr. Jentel. After a few calls, however, he began to realize that he was also very much interested in Miss Jentel herself, and, soon proving himself to be as competent with women as he was with history (we know not but that his gestures may have helped him here again), it was not long before they were engaged.

After Mr. Jentel heard of this, and had railed vainly against his daughter's choice, for so long a time that

he nearly brought on a relapse, he begrudgingly had to admit to himself that the engagement presented difficulties in the way of his carrying out the law suit upon which he had set his heart. He began to realize that it would probably be rather awkward and out of place to sue a man who was to be his son-in-law; emphatically against his will, it was true, but, nevertheless, his son-in-law. But it was only after he found out that in a month more at the most he would be able to leave the hospital as well as he ever had been, and after Professor Ezanuel had come to see him and begged his pardon and explained how the whole incident had occurred, that he definitely made up his mind to drop the case.

Later, Professor Ezanuel, having shown that his absentmindedness, though no whit abated, was no longer costly, and having proved himself to be an ideal husband for his daughter, became one of his boon companions, upon whom he was anxious to confer favors. He bought the house on the other side of Professor Ezanuel's, and had it remodeled into a joint garage for his car and the one he had given his son-in-law. Thus with a friendly, and for that matter family structure on either side, the likelihood of the Professor again ringing the door bell of a stranger was practically eliminated.

ANNA MARIE

I

I am going to see Joshua Lee Ball. It is two and a half years since I have seen him. The wind is screeching around the corners of the tall buildings, there are snow flurries in the air, and clouds are whipping across the sky, as if they were fire patrols charging to the scene of a disaster. People are gathering now. There is glass, shouting, and blood. A cab has crashed into a truck. I turn up my coat collar and walk faster.

I wonder where Joshua Lee Ball has been during the last two and a half years. To a distant part of the world, somewhere between the Himalayas and Cape Town, it is safe to venture. He seldom returns to the same place in his wanderings about these terrestrial hemispheres, except to that little hut in the mountains of Tennessee. Well I remember that day fifteen years ago when we set out for Alaska. He is a tall man, six feet four in stocking feet, thin, wiry, features sharp and almost bleached in their pallor, hair black and slightly kinky. I was stout and full even in those days.

Imagine my surprise when, after four days at sea, drawn together by a common love of adventure, new lands, and the search for fortune, apparently as close as if a lifelong friendship had existed, he told me that

his mother was of negro blood. "Yes," he said, "I suppose you will have nothing more to do with me, and in a way, I cannot blame you." I did not answer. "That is why I have spent the last ten years of my life wandering over and about the face of this earth. I have sought company that does not count the blood that is in a man. But one grows tired. Restless, I have wandered on, never finding a group that was quite compatible. I have picked up certain amounts of money as I have gone along and whatever education I was able. When back in the States, about every other year or so, I have gone without fail to see my mammy, Mammy Jeliza. Although I have taken infinite pains at times to conceal her race within me, I thank God that I love her."

"Yes, one would never suspect—your accent—your speech—it is not—"

"No, no. Brought up by dear Mammy Jeliza Ball in our mountain hut in Tennessee, I ran away at fourteen to emulate the speech and manners of the white color of my skin. Of course, I haven't succeeded entirely. Then—but I am boring you."

"No, no, not at all, my dear fellow."

"Well I wanted to tell you. You would have heard it. Besides I am not ashamed. Why should I be? There is Booker T. Washington and others, you know. Not that I will ever accomplish anything as notable as he."

As if reading the main question in my mind, he said, greatly moved, with somewhat of the drawl of the first

fourteen years of his life, "*He* was white. Mammy does not know his name. He was a very stylish gentleman from the north." His head rose proudly. "In a Major or Colonel's uniform. He was visiting the people of the estate on which Mammy was employed. (That is, nominally employed; her actual status was that of a well treated slave who refused to be freed.) More than this she does not know. Dear, dear mammy." His eyes were far off.

The loyalty of that man, as we were sitting there on the deck, the boat headed north along the Canadian coast, tipping from starboard to port, touched me. His head was in his hands, fingers spaced across his forehead, as if he expected them to be traced. His thick, rather straight black eye brows were bunched, and his slightly kinky hair, disordered, lopped over the bridge of his nose. My interest in him was increased by his confession. There was a sad romance to his life. He was proud, that was evident. He had neither thrown himself in with the race that had been thrust upon him, nor had he obnoxiously attempted to annex himself to the race to which he aspired. He evidently had educated himself to a certain extent, and had made and saved a little money. There were no obscure nor hidden corners of the globe which he had not touched. That was my ambition. Our interest is likely to be centered on two extremes: those who are childlike in their innocence, and those who have had a vast amount of experience and adventure. So, in a way, I envied him. The thought occurred to me that

the life of this man, uniting as it did the mystery of two races, would make good material for my first novel. Who has not dreamed of that initial outburst, even though his profession is that of an engineer. Undoubtedly he had desired to marry—a beautiful girl, lovely (that should be in the novel, too), but had had to turn away because, although he happened to be as white as a ghost, his children might be as black as Mammy Jeliza.

We became close friends. I would listen by the hour with ears at right angles to his travels and adventures. That is, we became great friends, with certain limitations—limitations, I suppose, to which he was thoroughly accustomed. I tramped about Alaska with him that summer, and the few times since that he has been in Chicago, he has 'phoned me, and I have come down, as I am doing tonight, to see him at his hotel. Upon each of these reunions, he has talked to me of strange names and sights, places and peoples; the wandering spirit of my life finding its only outlet during these years through his voice. The first reunion, feeling that I ought to reciprocate with confidences, I started to tell of my sweet wife and little boy; for I had gone back from Alaska to be married. He stopped me with a terrible gasp. There was something akin to anger on his face. How stupid I had been. I at once realized my mistake. Since then, I have sometimes spoken of business gains or losses, and to these he has listened attentively and with some show of interest, but for the most part I have been quiet in order to hear of royal

palms which line the driveways leading to the homes of wealthy Cubans, Indian Rajahs, a beautiful Spanish Diva, and African Sudan mothers, who nourish *en marche* the babes strapped to their backs.

A big hand is planked on my shoulder and a policeman slides around in front of me. "Say, you're wanted as a witness for this accident, back there. Damned if you're not a fast walker. I've been chasing you for these two blocks."

"No, I'm not. I didn't see it." (One spends a good share of one's life dodging the responsibility of being a witness.)

"The hell youse didn't. Why, by the God Almighty, you've got a good share of the windshield on you right now." He plucks what I must admit is a large piece of glass off my coat lapel.

"Well, whether there is glass on me or not, I didn't see it." Whirling, I slip out of his grasp, and run, dodging in and out through the crowd, down Michigan Boulevard. One doesn't have to go to Africa, I chuckle. My amusement does not last long; I don't like the way the clouds are whirling across the sky. A particularly vigorous snow flurry blinds me. My eyes smart. And glass on my lapel. I step into the Congress Hotel nervously. The night is not right.

"Mr. Joshua Ball?"

"Yes, Room C11. The room phones are to the right."

"No; he is expecting me."

II

The first thing that I noticed about Joshua Ball was that he was older, much older. Lines were deep under his eyes and from his nose past the corners of his mouth. He got up enthusiastically to see me, but even at that his step was slow; a man whose prime of life was gone.

"Well, Mr. Hawthorne" (he always addressed me formally and I never made any comment), "it has been for years this time. By Lawd, I'm glad to see you." There was that drawl, always an evidence of emotion with him. "And how is Mrs. Hawthorne and young Hawthorne?" He always asked me that. It was understood that I was to say "fine" and no more. "Do tell me about them later. I mean that I want to hear about them." I was surprised at this interest; for I knew him to be a man who meant what he said; not given to inquiring for the sake of politeness. "But the best of us will age, won't we, Mr. Hawthorne? Pardon me for saying so, but you do look some older. Not much, you know, Mr. Hawthorne, but some."

I started—Old! I? I didn't think so. "Well, you're no spring chicken yourself, you know, Ball." Somehow I felt on the defensive with this man that night. His face was heavy with shadows.

"I've just come from seeing Mammy Jeliza."

"Yes, you always go to see her first, don't you? But tell me in what part of this great and varied old globe of ours you have sojourned the last few years."

"In time, time—but Mammy Jeliza. I want to speak of her. Probably I am never going to see her again. Yes, I will too. That would not be right. It would be ungrateful." His excitement increased. "I wanted to see you tonight, particularly wanted to see you. I am *white*, Hawthorne—*white*, I tell you." He got up and thumped the table, breaking a glass. I looked at my lapel, then around for the door. There was blood in his face, anger. I thought that perhaps he was mad. But he laid a kindly hand on my shoulder, drew a chair close to mine, packed and lit a pipe, and offered me a cigarette.

"I want to tell you all about it. It is a long story." I felt that I was in the vicinity of a volcano, quiet before the next eruption.

"Landed at New Orleans when I got back this time. Took a river boat up the Mississippi for old Tennessee." His pipe went out. "It was early dusk when I got to the cabin. There was Mammy Jeliza, rocking back and forth, the same as she was the day I left her. The cabin was the same; only I scented a difference. Mammy threw her arms about me, danced up and down on her old toes, asked where I had been her Honey Child. Then her face clouds. 'Ah'se gwine tell right away. Ah'se been waitin' fo' to see you. Even though you hate your old mammy, Ah'se gwine tell right away. Promise you ain't gwine hate your old mammy. For listen, Honey; Ah'se not your mammy. Ah'se tellin' you, Ah'se not your mammy. It breaks poor ole mammy's heart!' "

“‘What, what, what!’”

“‘Dat’s right, Honey, Ah’s e not your mammy.’”

“‘Well, who am? The colored woman down the lane?’”

“‘No, Ah’s e gwine tell you. I keep nothin’ from you a minute, Honey.’”

“‘A minute, Mammy! It’s been forty-four years. I’m forty-four, Mammy.’”

“‘No, tain’t so. Anyways, I couldn’t tell you befo’. Befo’ your mother—*she am dead now.*’ I thought the old woman had gone insane, and that I would have to humor her. But there was the light of love in her old brown eyes, her spectacles, with one glass gone (she would never have it replaced) were up on her forehead, always a sign of great emotion with her, and her two remaining teeth were chattering. I was never able to get her to go to a dentist. Her broad face was wrinkled and creased until it was almost beautiful in its homeliness; and the wisps of her hair, so like dark grey wool, were hanging over her eyes.”

I leaned toward Ball. The latter paused impressively. He put aside his pipe. Finally he went on: “Anna Marie Hawkins was a beautiful daughter of Tennessee, and of one of the old and wealthy families of that state. Her hair was bronze; her eyes, frank, smiling, bewitching; her voice, the soft drawling caress of spring; and her dress, sweet, demure and draped in the style of the day—the late Seventies, after the Civil War. She and her brother, Gerald Hawkins, were the sole heirs to the vast, extended Hawkins estate. The

holdings, however, were only partially kept up; their labor was limited. Many of the negroes, taking advantage of their freedom, had fled to find 'a land of milk and honey' further north. Others, loyal, like Mammy Jeliza, had stayed, working as of old for nothing. That, indeed, was the only status that Gerald Hawkins would consider. As with most southerners at that slightly removed date, the Civil War rankled in his mind. He would be the last to brook a change. With him, the hatred of 'Yankees' and 'their ways' burned at fever heat, as unabated as the day the South surrendered. Anna Marie, much younger, did not share the full intensity of her brother's feeling; for—but that is getting ahead of my story." Joshua Ball stopped, his forehead was wrinkled.

"Go on," I urged. My chair was so close to his that there was only a faint line of light between our knees. I turned my head, waited; the Gideon Bible, dusty, was in my line of vision. The man, smiling, dreaming, musing—"Anna Marie"—had not heard me. The room clock was ticking, ticking. A guest passed our door, his feet sinking, not quite inaudibly, step after step in the thick hall carpet.

"A stranger came to Hawkinsville. Oh, yes, there is a Hawkinsville. At that time it was composed of small merchants subsisting on the Hawkins family and their round of guests. Later, I ran its streets as a boy with the other nigger—with the nigger kids."

"*Mademoiselle*,' the stranger said lightly, 'could you be so kind as to tell me the way to Hawkinsville?'

I am very tired, have been wandering most half a day. Hawkinsville is harder to find than it is on the map. I hope you can direct me.' The man who addressed Anna Marie was a former Colonel in the northern army. He was dusty. He must have traveled quite a piece."

"Anna Marie courtesied. 'I reckon I could,' she said. 'I am going there now.' "

" 'I may follow then?' "

" 'Follow?' "

" 'Accompany you, I mean.' "

" 'Ah,' she courtesied again, very low. 'Ah, Monsieur, *avec le plus grand plaisir*, if my brother does not catch you.' He laughed. Already she knew there was nothing in this man that she feared, and much she thought she could like. Her impressions were quick, almost instantaneous; here was a stranger on the road with whom she had talked scarcely two minutes, appealing to her perhaps more than any of the men she had met in her brother's house. 'But tell me why are you bound for Hawkinsville.' "

" 'To live there.' "

" 'To live there!—Hawkinsville?' "

" 'Yes, you see, I said that it is easier to find it on a map than in actuality.' "

" 'But it isn't. Please don't make such fun of Hawkinsville. Most maps don't place it at all.' "

" 'Well, the map that I had did. It placed every burg, every village, every hamlet. It was the largest map that I could buy; for it was to determine my

future. I was tired of life. I wanted a new existence, a new habitat. So, believing in chance, I spread the map out on the floor, shut my eyes, and swung my finger around and about for what I judged was a minute. Out of the thousands and thousands of towns it might have chosen, larger or just as small, from the Gulf to Canada, from New England to Florida, from the Alleghenies to the Rockies, and from those commendable mountain ranges to their respective seas, my finger rested on Hawkinsville. And here I am.' ”

“The narrow little street of Hawkinsville, with its half a dozen shingled stores, stretched out before them. The ex-Colonel looked down its short expanse—the chickens on the plank walk, the two crooked hitching posts, the combination undertaker, furniture and post office—to the cornfields, dubiously. Then back to Anna Marie. The clouds lifted. ‘And to stay,’ he said. ‘I wonder if any of these redoubtable emporiums will give me a job.’ ”

“Yes, Hawkinsville was miniature, but the street that ran through it soon branched out into a labyrinth of roads, spreading a spider web over the countryside: a wide road that followed the lake, narrow roads that curved to reach nearby woods, and untraveled roads, honeycombed with ruts, that led to unvisited deserted spaces. I can breathe these scenes over again now; though for the people I am dependent upon Mammy Jeliza’s graphic tale, the landscape lives before my eyes. I grew up there, romped there, swam there; yet soon yearned to get away. If I had only known—”

"Walking down these roads and the paths that ran from them, Anna Marie and Colonel Hilsley—"

"What was his name?" I interrupted sharply.

"Hilsley, Colonel Hilsley," came the answer as if from over the hills. My hand dropped stiff to my side, and my eyes fell, glued to my shoestrings.

"Anna Marie and Colonel Hilsley," he went on, "could often be seen—though rather successful in dodging Gerald Hawkins—strolling along the countryside, or aimlessly drifting in Hilsley's white canoe, a new acquisition, the white swan of love, he sentimentally called it. Frequently, then, the melodious strains of Anna Marie's guitar came over the water, and were heard above the usual noises of the night; the hum of the wind blowing through the trees, the chirping of the crickets in the tall border grass."

"That was fall. Early in the spring they decided they should not longer keep their troth from Anna Marie's brother; but it was not until late spring that they told him. It was a quiet evening. Their love was at its height. Yellow moon streaks were sifting through the grey mist to the tranquil lake below. Two flickering street lamps intermittently revealed the sleepy village of Hawkinsville, the shadow of its warehouse contentedly stretching out on the surface of the water; and from the nearby woods the restless pulsing of young leaves fanned the pungent odor of damp ferns across the yawning street."

"'It has been beautiful this night.'"

"'Yes—the mist—'"

"They left the lake, the town, and crossed the fields to the lawn that encircles the Hawkins home, its colonial pillars, tall men on stilts, its guardians. They stopped to watch, drawing a last breath before facing the storm, the carved fountain face spout sprays from its upturned mouth, which fell with a graceful curve into the surrounding marble basin; only an occasional spray possessed the energy to escape to the lawn."

"Hawkins took it very well. That is, he didn't say anything. He nodded his head. But his silence was ominous."

"And how I hate him, loathe him, despise him—could kill him," Ball interrupted himself.

"That fall, spring, was their romance."

"That summer was their tragedy."

"Hawkins, waiting a chance, picked a quarrel with Hilsley, I forget now on what trivial matter Mammy Jeliza said, and shot him."

I gasped, and my eyes filled.

"Hawkins, afraid of the law, fled post haste to Mexico, leaving the dead to bury the dead, and his sister to recover her senses. He felt well satisfied in having ended the life of the man who encouraged her in disloyalty to the South. She cried and moaned and moaned, hunted up black from the attic, conducted his funeral. The whole village and estate knew that."

"Hilsley's parents were dead. Although he had mentioned he was divorced, he had never told her the name or address of his former wife. Thus, living alone with

Hilsley for the last, the happiest, months of his life, Anna Marie was alone with him at his funeral, buried him alone."

"The town folks knew that. They did not know, however, her other secret. It was to Mammy Jeliza that she turned in her trouble; and that good soul hid her, watched over her, guarded her, took care of her."

"Thus it was that I was born in the shadow of that big black hulking Mammy, and in her big black attentive loving shadow I grew."

"The South is proud. Anna Marie realized that if she confessed my existence, her brother would never forgive her, and the long standing family honor would be gone. She saw that her duty was to be with her brother in his exile, to be a companion to him, to make a home for him."

"'Laws-a Sakes,' Aunt Jeliza told me a few days ago, rolling her eyes to the sky, 'how Missy, Missy Anna Marie did make me repeat never breathe to a soul dat she am your true mammy until she was gone to the Heavenly Hosts.'"

I stirred in my chair. Ball stopped. "Go on," I entreated, "I am particularly interested, particularly."

He repacked his pipe, tightly. The match went out. His pipes were never packed for easy lighting. I looked at him bending over the bowl, drawing in heavily. One lock of hair hung so far over his forehead that I was afraid it would catch fire with the tobacco. He brushed it back, running his fingers through his hair, increasing its disorder. Although, conscious since our

first days together of his imaginative qualities, never before tonight, before this story of his origin, had I appreciated his full grasp of the beautiful, the fanciful, the mystic. I hoped he would not read in my eyes the affection I felt for him.

“Go on to tell me more of Anna Marie,” I repeated. “You saw her again?”

“Yes, once, without knowing who she was. It was rather warm—in June. Wild roses were blooming on the edge of the woods. The longest day of the year had passed; the south swing of the sun had commenced, the prophecy of harvest; and in the offing scarlet leaves and then a blanket of snow. I was very happy trudging home, proud of a sore toe wrapped to the size of a bumble bee’s nest with dirty old cloths. Far up the road the white frame church, long in need of paint, was tolling the hour. I vaulted the rickety fence that stretched for ten feet in front of our cabin, the sore toe giving a good account of itself. A lady was standing at the doorway. My first instinct was to throw myself to the ground. Never had I seen such a beautiful, gorgeous, magnificent creature. I crawled toward her on hands and knees. She walked into the cabin. I stole in after her, hiding as best I could behind the fullness of her skirt. She turned around, smiled, patted me timidly on the head. Then her hands flew to her face. Presently her whole body commenced to tremble and shake, tears escaped from under her slender pointed fingers to run down her chin onto her neck. Soon she gave up, sobbed aloud, ran her

hand through her hair. She was not very pretty then. Mammy came in to comfort her. 'What am de matta, Missy, dear Missy, Mammy's Missy. Dare, dare.' She drew out a rickety old rocking chair, one rocker gone, and made her sit in it. She pointed her finger at me to chase me out of the room. 'You good-for-nothin', you,' she said, good-naturedly. 'You'se the cause of dis here delemine.'

"'No, no, Mammy, let him stay. Bring him to me.' Mammy swooped me up and dropped me in the lady's arms. Frightened to be so close to her elegance, my finger went in my mouth. She pulled it out gently, and lovingly drew my head against her breast. I didn't dare look at her for fear of breaking the charm of the fairyland she represented to me, but from the short quick breathing, I felt that she was crying again. She held me tightly; told me stories of good and bad bears, and rabbits, and little girls, and three wise men who followed a star to the manger of the Christ Child. Her voice was soft and crooning, she rocked me back and forth. I know not how long it was before I fell asleep. When I woke up, I was on my cot. I cried out for the lady. Mammy came in to say she had gone. I tumbled off the cot to search, but as Mammy said, she had disappeared. Then I cried, but not for long. Mammy brought a big box of candy, and fairyland books with bright orange and red and purple pictures, which the lady had left for me. She was a dream to me, a wonderful dream—I was only four."

"You know, of course, Mr. Hawthorne, that it was

Anna Marie. She never came back. Evidently to be near me made her too sad. I never saw her again. Her life was probably very empty—only memories—living on with her brother in Mexico, just a housekeeper for him—him—he who had killed her lover, my—”

As I had seen it earlier in the evening, his face was scarlet. For a moment he had lost control of himself, swearing vengeance, muttering in hoarse whispers. I was greatly relieved when he went on quietly.

“Then, after many years, believing that all the memory of the killing of Colonel Hilsley had gone, they came back to the United States. You see Anna Marie wrote to Mammy at intervals all through her life to ask about me. Mammy, of course, always promptly answered to the best of her ability and illiterate scrawl. They settled in New Mexico, in Albuquerque, in an old grey house there, the house of mystery, people called it, because they lived a life of seclusion, barring even their neighbors from their privacy. Meanwhile, as you know, I wandered over the face of the earth, believing myself black, consuming the best years of my life.”

“Finally the doors of that house in Albuquerque, that house of mystery and the secret of my birth, opened, but only to the pallor of death. Anna Marie, faded, worn out with her flight from scandal, was dead. That was two years ago. Carrying out his sister’s wish, Hawkins wrote to Mammy Jeliza of her death. When I arrived at the old cabin, Mammy, believing that the death of Anna Marie absolved her from her promise, told me their secret.”

Both of us were silent. A breeze coming in through the transom stirred the old rose velour curtains.

"Tomorrow I start on my mission."

"Mission? Mission? What do you mean? Are you going away again? I should think that now you would want to stay here and mingle with the people whose company has been denied you by a false fate."

He laughed, hollow, long drawn out, ringing, but above all hollow.

"I'm going to hunt Hawkins out in his mysterious house. I am forty-four. You yourself said that I look old. The best of my life is gone. Lived under a disadvantage that I need not have borne." His eyes were set, stone cold, staring at a spot on the wall. He laughed again, shriller than before, piercing. Stirring uneasily, I tried to quiet him. "You will wake up the people in the adjoining rooms." It was feeble; he brushed me aside.

"He it is who must suffer. I blame him—*all* on him. Picking a quarrel with my father, shooting him, ruining the life of my mother. No censure can be placed on her for leaving me. She was a proud girl, defending her reputation, taking whatever means she knew, no matter how self-denying, to keep quiet her scandal. There would have been no scandal, if it hadn't been for Hawkins' pistol. They would have been married, and I—"

"By God, but you're taking this thing too drastically. The best of your life is before you. A man is young at forty-four."

“Not the way I’ve lived.” That same long hollow laugh. “But say—I can still make my life of worth—what about my father? His life is to be avenged, avenged.” His teeth were grinding; he stood up excitedly; his fist thumped the wall. A voice from the next room complained.

“But there is law. Put your knowledge in the hands of an attorney, and let justice be worked out through the law,” I pleaded.

“I know the delay, the vacillation, the lack of satisfaction in that course. I’m leaving tomorrow.” His eyes were narrow. I realized his determination.

“But I—I can prevent you—it is my duty—when I leave here tonight I can inform the police of your intention. Now look at this sensibly—work through the right channels.”

“You wouldn’t do that.” There was the pleading tone of a child in his answer. “But if you should, I shall be forced to keep you with me. Oh, I might have known you would not understand. He was not your father. You do not see the obligation.”

“Listen, Ball, I mean Hilsley—you have not noticed the effect on me of your tale. It is going to surprise you, as it has me. I have sat here stunned, bewildered. My mother left my father. She obtained a divorce from him and took us, my sister and myself, little tots, away with her.”

“I know, but—” he interrupted, his interest naturally centering that evening on his own affairs.

I laid a restraining hand on his shoulder. “He set

out to start anew—journeyed south—under an assumed name—Hilsley.” His knees stiffened, as mine had before. He stared at me. “You and I are half brothers,” I went on.

“Hawthorne,” he said, raising his hand, “this is going too far.”

“No, I swear on that Bible over there. It is the truth. One of those strange coincidences occurring far more frequently in life than in novels. We never heard of him again. We all supposed that his continued silence meant but one thing—that he wished to remain unknown to us. You and I have known each other for twenty years. We have been drawn together in spite of a supposed difference in race. We have been controlled by a fate which had led us together with one hand, at the same time holding back from us with the other the great knowledge of a common inheritance.” Hilsley was stretched out in his chair, tense; a straight line from his head to his heels.

The discovery of our relationship acted as an inhibition, for the time being, to a strengthening of feeling between us. As is so often the case, I was distinctly embarrassed by an exposure of such portentous significance. A situation to which I was not accustomed made me as self-conscious and wary as a boy in his first pair of long trousers. That which later would draw us close was for the moment holding us farther apart. The knowledge of intimate relationship entails distance until those whom it concerns are habituated to the change. I tried to break this barrier. “We

have an equal interest in hunting Hawkins, it seems. Do you wonder my attention was riveted on you? At first I thought it was unbelievable—my relation to the story—but as you went on and on, I saw that it was inescapable. Here within the four walls of this room, you have revealed the past intertwining of threads of life that long have run their separate ways.”

Hilsley, his hands twitching, tried to nod solemnly. He had no time for pondering and philosophizing over the coincidences of life, while the desire for action was shooting through him with every beat of the heart. I could see that he was wondering whether I would support him or work against him. The wonder of our relationship did not disturb him at that time. He merely saw in it a possible lever for concerted action. Years of wandering in the distant corners of the earth, corners where legal codes were unknown or ignored and the fulfillment of right and retribution rested entirely on one's own shoulders, had ground into him his point of view of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; had burned it into his skin with the heat of the desert sun, and frozen it into his veins with the chill of the icelands centering the poles. Retaliation had been too long overdue; opportunity demanded action. Decisiveness had to be thrown against the long cheating scales if the moaning of forty years was to be avenged. I could see these things running through his mind, and with the primitive savage instinct that so-called civilization has not obliterated in any of us, I understood them, yet was afraid to concur.

"Your interest, too, is in the finding of Hawkins. It comes down to this: Will you go with me?"

"Yes, I am interested in his punishment, vitally; but why not handle our grievances through legal channels? In such a way, it seems to me, our combined evidence will best hasten the administration of justice."

"That's useless, Hawthorne. I'm setting out. You, of course, can do as you please. I trust you not to interfere."

I could not do as I pleased; I should have to follow. Certainly some way could be found of restraining him. I telephoned my wife that unexpectedly I had to go away at once on business. Excusing myself on the grounds of going down to see the room clerk, I sent two telegrams, directing that the answers be forwarded to my office. I had a cot put in Hilsley's room. I was afraid to leave him. He tossed in his bed till daylight. Arranging to meet Hilsley at the train, I ran for the office. The answers to the telegrams were there. After reading them, I felt better. However, there was no use in telling Hilsley.

III

Albuquerque, predominantly Spanish, is a quaint town. Although the weather is seldom other than warm, the day on which we arrived we were greeted by a frozen city. It was far too cold to permit the fall of more snow. People were hurrying across the streets, holding their hands to their ears and exhaling quan-

tities of steam that would have done credit to locomotives. The clerk at the Algarado Hotel, an edifice of one hundred rooms, informed us that it was one of the coldest days in his memory of that part of the country. How short is the memory of a man about the weather. However, it was cold. The hotel manager had to arrange to have the door men change every fifteen minutes, reviving the one off duty with cups of boiling coffee. I should have been content to bask a while by the old fashioned log fire in the lobby grate. Hilsley would have none of that. He insisted on starting at once for Hawkins' address, the one given to him by Mammy Jeliza.

At last we bribed a mongrel cab driver, with a Ford painted a robin's egg blue, set off by a band of white stars, to take us. None of the Yellows would leave their moorings. The fellow we did get charged us the fare in advance. About two blocks from our destination, the cab—limping for the last mile—came to a final sputtering halt. The necessity of plowing the remaining distance on foot loomed before us. Leaving his Robin's Egg Ford to exist for itself in the center of the road, our friend, directing us over his shoulder, ran for shelter. After three blocks (needless to say the two-block estimate was merely friendly encouragement on the part of the driver), I was ready to credit the hotel clerk's memory. It was a long time since I had been in Alaska. The turned-up collar of my coat did not cover my ears. Grabbing each side of the brim, I stretched my hat with all my strength. Finally, with

the sound of ripping, it slid over my ears. I felt better. The best blocker I know has never quite been able to revamp that old velour to its former self.

There before us, by the rusty number on the door, was our house. What a sight! The surrounding homes were picturesquely Spanish. This white frame structure was a cross between a doubtful Colonial motive and the American farm architecture of a generation ago. An angular, blocky cupola topped it, a dinky second floor bay butted from it, the rest of it was straight. Yet the effect was not humorous—it was foreboding, dismal, uncanny. One thought of ghosts peeking from the slanting cupola, murderers crouching in the dinky bay. The snow drifts in the yard must have had an unnatural base; no others in sight reached so high. That was the way one felt about the entire house—something concealed under the surface. At least that was the way, as we soon learned, that the neighbors felt about it. The curtains were drawn, with the exception of the one at the cupola window, which was up approximately a half foot. The door was nailed shut. Repeated pounding, kicking, thumping, brought no answer.

“Deserted—he has fled,” Hilsley moaned.

“Yes, he has gone all right. I could have told you that before,” I said, with as much emphasis as my chattering teeth would permit; then bolted for the house on the right. To the best of my eye, it was closer than the one on the left. Knowing from the answer to my telegrams that the culprit was no longer alive, this

search for the slayer was not very real to me. Then, besides, my father having disappeared when I was too young to have any memory of him, my interest in him, aside from a genealogical curiosity, was probably not as intense as it should have been. On the other hand, to Hilsley, fired to the boiling point with the discovery of the mystery of his birth, he was indeed vivid. I could appreciate that.

Hilsley tried the rest of the doors before following. He found me, thanks to the mistress, a portly, friendly soul, whose face had no excuse for being as red as it was, in the living room with my feet on the radiator. Hilsley scoffed at me. He didn't even take time to rub his hands before questioning, rapid fire, our hostess.

"Did a Mr. Hawkins live in the house to the right of you?"

"Oh, the one I just saw you trying to get in? Yes, he did. So did his sister, Miss Hawkins. A lovely looking lady she was, too. He never kept it up after her death. She died two years ago, come this May, poor soul. Then he passed along four months ago."

"What!"

"Yep, followed her." Hilsley buried his face in his hands. "The house has been haunted ever since."

"Haunted!" I echoed.

"Yes, that is what everyone says, and some say as how it was haunted from the time they moved in it ten years ago. Leastwise they never saw anyone. Stayed there like turtles in their shells. The doctor who attended him on his death bed used to go in with a police-

man. They say that Hawkins laughed at that. Be that as it may, I don't know. He said that he had no relations. The doctor arranged his funeral. He held it at a church chapel. Not in that house, you can bet. We, and the people on the other side, were the only ones that went, although I guess we didn't have any right to. Hawkins had never spoken to any of us. We attended more out of curiosity, I guess. My husband has always sorta gone in for those sorta things."

Three or four of her little brats, roly-poly and red like herself (chasing each other around in circles), scurried into the room. She scolded them half-heartedly. "Shoo, children, and get some doughnuts. They are under the turned over plate on the next to the bottom pantry shelf. Tom, let go of Mary's hair." They were off as a man, and stayed to eat them all, I imagine.

"Nice kids," I said.

She beamed on me—then turned back to Hilsley. "Well, as I was saying, my husband has sorta gone in for those sorta things and I'm not adverse to them myself if they are not overdone."

Hilsley's head was still in his hands. His mission was cheated.

She rambled on, "No one has been in that house since. Once the Smiths, on the other side, saw a big grizzly head peeking out of that cupola window. They swear that they did." My knees shook. "No one has put a foot in that house, not even the police or any of the city officials have gone through it yet. They keep

putting it off, saying that they have cases ahead of it, but many believe they are afraid—”

“You know we’re renting this place for a song. Did you know that?” I shook my head and glanced out of the corner of my eye toward the abject Hilsley.

“Yes, we are. The people who lived here before—fine people they were, too, stylish, the Crawford-Harrison’s—did you know them?” I shook my head again. “Well, anyway, as the evidence became more and more that that house was haunted they became more and more afraid to live here; so, as I say, we got the chance to rent this place from them cheap.”

I was staring compassionately at Hilsley. She followed my eyes.

“Say, what is the matter with him?”

“Just cold,” I said.

She had fallen into speaking of Hilsley as if he was a detached being from whom no response could be expected. We moved him over to the radiator. He did not stay there long. Jumping up suddenly, he yelled for a hatchet.

“My Lord!” she said, “a hatchet?” trembling from head to foot.

“Oh, I beg your pardon, lady, for startling you so. I want the hatchet to help in getting in next door. I’m going to break the glass and knock in the frame work of one of the windows; so that we can crawl through.”

“You mean so that you can crawl through,” I corrected, still shivering at the thought of that large head below the bottom line of the cupola shade, seen by the

Smiths, whoever they were. I supposed that they also rented their house cheap. I was about to ask our hostess in regard to that point until I noticed that she was absorbed with Hilsley.

"Why do you want to get in that house?" she questioned him.

"Hawkins was a relation of ours," I interrupted glibly. "We have come to settle his affairs, and arrange all that he has left—whatever it may be."

"Oh, then he did lie. I thought so. He has relations."

"Well, such as we are," I replied. "We are not very close, and yet the closest ones that remain to him."

Thus we started our inquiry. Hilsley, silent, stepped ahead; I lagged behind, our gullible, talkative hostess (Mrs. Peterson was the kind soul's name) much braver than I thought, trudging along beside me. She had a hard time getting through the window. Pulling lustily, the memory of my achievement with my hat giving me confidence, I at last gained success for her. Hilsley was already upstairs.

The house was a disappointment to Mrs. Peterson, a relief to me; there was very little of the haunted aspect about it. It was even measurably neat. There was a certain amount of litter and disorder, but not as much as one would expect after nearly two years without a woman's management. Mice could be heard scuttling within the walls—probably set to running by the wind whistling through the broken glass and the noise of our presence. But certainly there was nothing foreboding. We mounted the steps. The first room

that we entered had been Hawkins'. We right about faced. I felt a qualm there, and Mrs. Peterson did not care to linger. In the next room we came upon Hilsley, beside the head of the bed, down on his knees. We tiptoed forward with reverent temerity. He had turned aside the pillow and was holding a tiny satin slipper. Stretched out past the open fingers of his other hand were a blue silk baby ribbon and a lock of jet black hair, slightly kinky. Over the dressing table, on which rested a china powder box and a brush and comb tray, decorated delicately with a border of light blue flowers (evidently placed in her room by him after her death), was the life size portrait of an exquisite, dreamy lady—golden bronze hair, a sweetly perfect mouth, pale, tapering fingers, wrists so slender that the thumb and first finger of my right hand could have closed twice around either one of them—the incense of whose breath I could easily imagine enamoring the air.

Hilsley was crying softly, once more the child whose slipper he held in his hand. It was safe to assume that his reverence and love for Anna Marie had crowded from his heart the hatred of her brother.

He turned to her portrait; covered his face with his hands, as if he were in the presence of a halo; and sobbed afresh. Also in tears, Mrs. Peterson, knowing not the significance of her act, and yet perhaps knowing it, for women are intuitive, put her hand on his shoulder.

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